

Guide Book

To Public

INVOLVEMENT **2001**

Development of Highway Projects



Idaho Transportation Department Guidebook to Public Involvement

Development of Highway Projects

2001

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Table of Contents

List of Tables	ii
Preface	1
What is the Purpose of This Guidebook?	1
Who Should Read This Guidebook?	1
How Is This Guidebook Organized?	2
Chapter 1: Public Involvement: An Overview	3
Definition of Public Involvement	3
ITD's Need for Effective Public Involvement	4
A General Approach to Public Involvement	6
Chapter 1 Summary	8
Chapter 2: Public Involvement Process	9
Importance of Scoping Public Involvement and Developing a Plan	9
Scoping of Public Involvement on a Project	10
Scoping Questions	10
Development of a Public Involvement Plan	19
Components of a Public Involvement Plan	19
Chapter 2 Summary	27
Chapter 3: Simple and Complex Projects	28
The Complexity of a Project	28
Levels of Environmental Evaluation Needed	29
Simple Projects	30
Complex Projects	39
Sample Public Involvement Plans	51
Chapter 3 Summary	72
Chapter 4: Concluding, Documenting and Evaluating Public Involvement	73
An Overview	73
Communicating Decisions to the Public	73
Documenting the Process and Results of Public Involvement	74
Evaluating Public Involvement Strategies and Activities	76
Chapter 4 Summary	79
Chapter 5: Public Involvement: Roles and Responsibilities	80
Roles and Responsibilities	80
Chapter 5 Summary	84
Appendices	85
A. NEPA and the Transportation Decision Making Process	85
B. Public Affairs Office	88
C. Working With Consultants	90
D. Bibliography of Resources	92
E. Guidebook Development Process	94
F. ITD 2001 Design Manual- Public Information Meetings and Public Hearings	97

List of Tables

Table 1	Public involvement activities, simple projects	31
Table 2	Public involvement activities, complex projects	41
Table 3	Documentation of public involvement	75
Table 4	Public involvement responsibilities, complex projects with consultants	80
Table 5	Public involvement responsibilities, complex projects without consultants	83
Table 6	Consultant guidelines	90
Table 7	Consultant recommendations	91

Preface

What is the Purpose of This Guidebook?

The need for public involvement in the design of highway projects in Idaho is at an all time high. Idaho is experiencing substantial growth in population, motorists and construction projects. The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) has developed this *Guidebook to Public Involvement: Development of Highway Projects* to address these needs.

The guidebook's purpose is to assist project managers, project concept team members and public involvement consultants with planning and implementing systematic public involvement in the development of highway projects. You'll find process guidelines for planning, integrating, documenting and, ultimately, evaluating public involvement activities.

The knowledge generated through the public involvement process is vital if ITD is to develop effective and efficient highway projects. ITD can make better decisions about highway projects by attending to public involvement planning, integrating public involvement activities into the development process and documenting these activities,

Who Should Read This Guidebook?

This guidebook is written for project managers, project concept team members, consultants and public involvement specialists. Because it is a guidebook, it uses the term *you* in discussions of the processes for planning and implementing public involvement, regardless of whether you are an ITD employee or consultant. You may not be responsible for all components of scoping, creating and implementing these public involvement plans, but you will benefit from understanding those processes. The guidelines in this document are just, guidelines, not regulations.

How Is This Guidebook Organized?

Chapter 1	Defines public involvement, explains why it is vital to the success of highway projects, and summarizes ITD's overall approach for public involvement.
Chapter 2	Provides steps for planning public involvement, with a discussion of scoping the public involvement for projects and developing a written plan.
Chapter 3	Delineates <i>simple</i> and <i>complex</i> projects and suggests appropriate levels of public involvement for each. This chapter also provides sample public involvement plans.
Chapter 4	Discusses processes for communicating decisions, evaluating public involvement strategies and approaches, and documenting public involvement activities and results.
Chapter 5	Identifies public involvement responsibilities and who is accountable.
Appendices	<p>Include the following supplementary information related to public involvement for highway projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NEPA and the Transportation Decision Making Process• Public Affairs Office• Working with Consultants• Bibliography of Resources• Guidebook Development Process• Public Information Meetings and Public Hearings

Chapter 1: Public Involvement: An Overview

This chapter provides the following information:

- [Definition of public involvement](#)
- [ITD's need for effective public involvement](#)
- [A general approach to public involvement](#)
- [Chapter summary](#)

Definition of Public Involvement

Public involvement is a process for including communities in the development of ITD highway projects. The U.S. Department of Transportation defines public involvement as “two-way communication aimed at incorporating the views, concerns and issues of the public into the decision-making process.” The public provides input on transportation needs, concerns and environmental considerations. ITD uses this input to help make transportation decisions.

Decision makers often forget the importance of this two-way communication. They mistake *public education* for *public involvement*. Public education is “one-way communication intended to inform the public.” Certainly public education is vital because it allows the department to inform people of critical issues. Public involvement is important during all phases of project development. Public education is especially important during later phases when project construction directly influences citizen's daily travel.

Decision makers also forget the range of public involvement planning. Public involvement during the development of a highway project encompasses much more than information meetings or public hearings. Involving the public by sharing and collecting information begins early and ranges from one-on-one meetings to attending local city council meetings. Public involvement continues through the life of a project. By knowing the needs and concerns of a community, ITD can develop a project that best meets the needs of ITD and the community it serves.

ITD's Need for Effective Public Involvement

ITD's mission is to “provide high quality, cost-effective transportation systems that are safe, reliable and responsive for the economical and efficient movement of people and products.” This mission is fundamental to life in Idaho, where highway systems span a huge geographic area and serve more people than other modes of transportation. Within that mission, ITD identifies and plans necessary highway projects, which involves considerable time and money.

To accomplish its mission, ITD must involve the public in meaningful ways during project development. Only the community can tell the department its concerns and needs. Once ITD understands those concerns and needs, it can:

- [Meet its public involvement goal and objectives](#)
- [Make sound decisions](#)
- [Fulfill its legal responsibilities](#)

Meeting Public Involvement Goal and Objectives

ITD's goal for public involvement is informed decisions. Public involvement enables the department to gather concerns and needs of the public to be considered during the decision making process. ITD strives to meet its public involvement goal through the following objectives:

- Communicating complete, accurate, understandable and timely information to the public throughout the project development process
- Actively gathering input from the community by providing citizens with meaningful opportunities to participate in the development and decision-making process
- Complying with requirements of Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and ensuring all citizens regardless of race, income or physical limitations have the opportunity to participate¹
- Providing opportunities for early and continuing involvement
- Considering and responding to community input in project development studies and in final decisions
- Designing highway projects that are consistent with federal and state laws and sensitive to local goals and objectives

¹ See Idaho Transportation Department, Bureau of Civil Rights and Title VI Assurance Plan.

Making Sound Decisions

By meeting the objectives listed above, ITD can ensure meaningful public involvement contributes to sound decisions. ITD not only strives to provide a safe and efficient transportation system, but also considers the preservation and enhancement of the economic, social and environmental conditions in our state.

The purpose of early involvement is to educate and receive public input on developing a project. Many stakeholders will enthusiastically support ITD concepts and designs. Others will have reservations because of issues the department has not considered or was not aware of. By expressing their concerns, and possible solutions, these stakeholders help identify the scope of a project and the degree of future public involvement needed. In addition, if stakeholders have several opportunities to participate in the decision-making process, they will understand why the department decided on a particular course of action.

Public involvement truly must be two-way communication. ITD will erode public trust if only the department's words, not its actions, say public input is valued. Neither ITD nor its consultants should use public involvement and the decision-making process to justify decisions that have already been made. ITD must also recognize that it cannot please all the people all the time. ITD should not expect that, by planning and implementing public involvement, its employees and consultants can turn all project opponents into supporters. The department strives for valuable communication that helps "provide high quality, cost-effective transportation systems that are safe, reliable, and responsive for the economical and efficient movement of people and products."

Fulfilling Legal Responsibilities

Public involvement is mandatory in order to meet federal requirements. Following is a list of federal legislation, regulations and policies that guide public involvement in project development. Copies of these documents are available in ITD's Office of Public Affairs:

- 23 U.S.C. 128
- 23 U.S.C 109 (h)
- Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act 1991 (ISTEA)
- Transportation Efficiency Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21)
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- American with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- [23 CFR 771.111 \(h\)](#)

- [23 CFR 771.111 \(2\) \(ii\)](#)
- [23 CFR 771.119 \(e\) and \(f\)](#)
- [23 CFR 771.123 \(g\) and \(h\)](#)
- [40 CFR 1500 – 1508](#)

A General Approach to Public Involvement

To meet the needs of both the project and the public, ITD encourages you to plan public involvement that meets three criteria—public involvement that is early, integrated, and documented.

Early Public Involvement

By scoping and planning, ITD can develop meaningful public involvement and address concerns early in the process. By addressing concerns early, ITD will have a much better opportunity to ensure that controversy doesn't stop a project and erode public trust. The time and effort the department spends involving the public early can expedite project development because of the public support and confidence the department has earned in the process.

ITD should scope and plan for public involvement early in the project development process. Scoping assists you in identifying the segments of the public that are likely to be affected and or impacted by a project and determine attitudes toward the project.

ITD generally recommends that scoping a project for public involvement occur during concept scoping (January 2001, [Design Manual 4.4.3](#)). The department has developed scoping questions, found in [Chapter 2](#) and in [A Guide to Completing the ITD-783 Concept Report](#). Responses to scoping questions should be attached to the completed [ITD-2708 Preliminary Project Concept](#) form.

Developing a public involvement plan will be much easier once you have answered the scoping questions. They are required for complex projects. *Simple* and *complex* projects are discussed in more detail in [Chapter 3](#).

Integrated Public Involvement

Project design and public involvement should go hand in hand. Public involvement activities should be integrated into the project development process and not thought of as separate. The best public involvement is going to result from close coordination with the project manager, project team members, ITD public involvement coordinator and consultants. Depending on whether highway projects are expected to be simple or

complex, you can identify and plan for the appropriate level of public involvement.

Documented Public Involvement

ITD needs to document its activities and the outcomes of department communication with the public and specific stakeholder groups. This documentation allows the department to track its decisions and justify them, if necessary. Documenting informal meetings with the local mayor is equally as important as the formal recording of citizen comments at a public hearing.

In [Chapter 2](#), you will find worksheets (one with scoping questions and one for plan development) that help you scope the public involvement for a project and develop a public involvement plan. As part of the documentation process, you should attach your responses to the scoping questions with the [ITD-2708 Preliminary Project Concept](#) form. For complex projects, you will submit your public involvement plan to Headquarters Office of Public Affairs, public involvement coordinator and attach it to the project's *Location and/or Design Study Report*. In addition, a brief description should be included in the report that details citizen comments and concerns and how the department addressed those concerns. Once project development is complete, several public involvement documents need to be included in the resident engineer's file to assist with public information efforts during construction. ([See Table 3, Documentation of public involvement](#))

Chapter 1 Summary

In this chapter, we discussed why ITD values public involvement for several reasons. Effective public involvement:

- Should obtain meaningful collaboration and input from the community, which should result in better decisions. Such collaboration also reduces the likelihood of legal actions challenging department decisions.
- Helps the department make sound decisions.
- Fulfills federal requirements.
- Allows ITD to develop projects that meet with community standards.
- Enhances ITD's credibility and image as a responsible community leader.

Chapter 2: Public Involvement Process

This chapter provides the following information:

- [The importance of scoping and developing a plan](#)
- [Scoping a project for public involvement](#)
- [Scoping questions](#)
- [Writing a public involvement plan](#)
- [Components of a public involvement plan](#)
- [Chapter summary](#)

Importance of Scoping Public Involvement and Developing a Plan

Two tasks are vital for planning public involvement:

- Scoping a project for the need and degree of public involvement
- Writing the public involvement plan for a project

These activities are important to the successful development of ITD highway projects since each project has a different level of public interest. Some will generate little interest. Others will generate tremendous interest and require well-planned public involvement activities.

Well-planned means *proactive*. During the project scoping or [ITD-2708 Preliminary Project Concept](#) completion, you scope a project's need for public involvement by:

- Identifying potential controversies
- Gauging levels from interest by various stakeholders
- Assessing available resources
- Deciding which tools and techniques will work best for enhancing two-way communication with the public
- Identifying social, economic and environmental concerns

Scoping of Public Involvement on a Project

ITD recommends that public involvement scoping occur during the broader [concept scoping](#)², a process delineated in [Section 4.5.1 of the Design Manual](#). Scoping a project for public involvement accomplishes the following:

- It helps the project manager ask the questions that are critical to the project's success.
- It provides the information necessary to write the public involvement plan that will guide future public involvement activities and schedules.
- If conducted before a consultant is hired, it helps ITD determine which consultant could provide the best public involvement services.
- It allows project managers to better analyze a consultant's scope of work.

One of the most important determinations made during scoping is whether a project is *simple* or *complex*. (Simple and complex projects are defined in [Chapter 3](#) of this guidebook.) Your responses to the scoping questions may indicate that a seemingly simple project is complex because of a high level of public concern.

Scoping Questions

The following form includes questions that will help you scope the public involvement needs of a transportation project as the project is developed.

- Respond to the scoping questions as you complete the [ITD-2708 Preliminary Project Concept](#) form and
- Ask the public involvement coordinator for help in completing the scoping questions, if necessary.

² *Scoping* can be a confusing term since it also applies to the larger analyses conducted at the beginning of a project. ITD is legally required to use a formal scoping process for projects requiring environmental impact statements (EISs). The department also uses an informal scoping process to determine the concept of a project.

ITD Public Involvement Scoping Questions

Please respond to the following items as comprehensively as possible.

Project name: _____

Project manager: _____

Project sponsor: _____

Key number: _____

Project number: _____

Please use additional pages if you do not find enough room below for any of the answers.

1. Project origin and background

a. Why is this project in the program? _____

b. Why is this project needed? _____

c. What are the concerns or history of public involvement in the communities affected by this project? _____

- d. What does the community (elected officials and others) know about this project? ____

2. Project Impacts

- a. What are the benefits of this project? How will it improve the community? _____

- b. Will the project change the character or function of the highway? How? _____

- c. Are there any special concerns associated with the project? _____

- d. What public reaction is expected? _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Stakeholders³

- a. Who is impacted by this project? Who are the project stakeholders? (This list should be updated as needed throughout the project.) _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

³ Stakeholders are individuals and organizations that use, develop, and sponsor or are impacted by highway projects. They range from the public who drive the highway, merchants who do business along the highway and local and state officials who play a part in developing the highway.

b. What is the best way to provide information to stakeholders? _____

c. What are the best ways to gather input from stakeholders? _____

d. Whose needs will be met by this project? _____

e. Whose needs will not be met? _____

- f. Are any minority, low-income, Indian tribes, elderly or other populations with special needs affected or impacted by this project? _____

- g. What is the best way to develop two-way communication with minority, low-income, Indian tribes, elderly or other populations with special needs who are affected or impacted by this project? _____

4. Schedule

- a. What is the schedule for project development? _____

b. Will the project require a merger process, and if so, why? _____

c. What community events could be affected by this project? _____

5. Legal questions

a. Will right-of-way need to be purchased? If so how much, and what actions are necessary? _____

b. What are the mandates or regulations governing this project? _____

c. What are the possible environmental or cultural impacts? _____

d. What impacts will there be to roadways or facilities under another agency's jurisdiction? _____

6. Resources

- a. What resources do I need to implement public involvement for this project? _____

- b. What resources do I have to implement this project? If resources are not adequate what steps can be taken? _____

Development of a Public Involvement Plan

Every highway project is different; each one requires a public involvement plan tailored to its unique needs and issues. The information obtained from the scoping questions will help you determine the appropriate public involvement goals, objectives, strategies, and tools. You can detail these elements in the public involvement plan to ensure that methods for soliciting public input are effective. With advance planning, changes are less likely to be necessary midway through a project. That means projects are more likely to stay within budget and on schedule.

The first task in developing a plan is to identify the goals and objectives for public involvement on a project. Clear goals and objectives will help you identify the strategy needed. As a part of that strategy, you can choose the tools and techniques to meet the public involvement goal.

Flexibility is also a critical component of any strategy. Effective public involvement activities should change as conditions and situations change.

Components of a Public Involvement Plan

The form on the following pages includes sections that will help you write the public involvement plan for a transportation project. ITD recommends the following actions:

- Complete the scoping questions before you start writing the public involvement plan.
- Write a plan for complex highway projects, but not necessarily for simple projects.
- Ask the public involvement coordinator for help completing the public involvement plan, if necessary.
- Submit your public involvement plan to Headquarters Office of Public Affairs, public involvement coordinator and attach a copy to the *Location and/or Design Study Report*.

Using your responses to scoping questions, record your ideas and develop a sound public involvement plan. Even if public involvement activities change because of changes to the project, you will have a strong foundation with concise goals and objectives that allow flexibility. The different sections are described on the following pages:

1. Project Introduction. This section of the public involvement plan should explain the project, as well as provide any background information about the project. This section will also set the tone for the project's public involvement and may be useful when developing materials for the project.

2. Goals and Objectives of Public Involvement in the Project. Every public involvement plan begins with ITD's goals for public involvement.

- Gather the concerns and needs of the public that will be considered during the project's decision making process.
- Use information gathered from the public to make informed decisions.

The objectives should be derived from the specific circumstances of the project. The more specific the objectives, the better they will guide the public involvement plan. Objectives provide justification for all other activities included in this plan.

3. Project Stakeholders. This section of the public involvement plan should cover two categories of information. First, it should identify who might be interested in participating and whose participation is necessary for the department to make sound decisions. Next, it should identify the best channels of communication with stakeholders and what information these stakeholders need about the project.

4. Project Strategy. This section of the public involvement plan should identify the general approach and public involvement process for achieving the project's goals and objectives.

5. Tools and Techniques. This section of the public involvement plan identifies the tools and techniques that will be used to achieve the public involvement goals and objectives. Before selecting a tool or technique, review what has worked for prior projects. Poorly planned involvement activities are rarely successful. Understanding the project and the level of public interest will help you select the appropriate tools and techniques to be used in the public involvement process. For example, the following tools can help meet a project's goals and objectives:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Brochures | • Media involvement | • Project advisory committees |
| • Charrettes | • Newsletters | • Project hot lines |
| • Information meetings | • One-on-one contacts or meetings | • Public hearings |

- Letters to property owners or interested parties
- Logos
- Mailing lists or stakeholder databases
- Partnerships
- Presentations
- Press releases
- Surveys
- Web pages⁴
- Workshops

For definitions and discussions of possible public involvement activities, refer to *Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-making*, September 1996, by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. This publication is available from Headquarters Office of Public Affairs, public involvement coordinator.

6. Resources. This section of the public involvement plan should identify resources (including time and money) necessary to implement the project's public involvement activities. It is important to know the cost of your tools and techniques in order to determine if available resources are adequate. If not, you will need to look for additional resources.

7. Project Schedule. This section of the public involvement plan should detail the schedule necessary for public involvement activities. Identifying project milestones helps determine when particular public involvement activities are appropriate. Key public involvement activities should be integrated into the project's critical path method (CPM). The Project Activity Flowcharts, Simple Type and Complex Type identify where "typical" public involvement activities occur in during the development process.

8. Management. This section of the public involvement plan identifies the chain of communication, roles and responsibilities between Headquarters Office of Public Affairs, the district as well as any public involvement consultants. This section is especially important if a consultant is implementing public involvement activities.

9. Evaluation. This section of the public involvement plan should identify methods and measurements for evaluating whether the strategy, tools, and techniques are meeting public involvement goals and objectives for the project. Evaluation should occur throughout the project.

⁴ Please consult "Doing Business with ITD" before creating a project web page, <http://www2.state.id.us/itd/business.htm>

Template for a Public Involvement Plan

Please fill out the following sections comprehensively, as required by the level of anticipated public involvement.

Project name: _____

Project manager: _____

Project sponsor: _____

Project number: _____

Key number: _____

1. Project Introduction

Explain the project, as well as any background information about the project.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

2. Goals and Objectives of Public Involvement on the Project

Goals:

- Gather the concerns and needs of the public to be considered during the project's decision making process.
- Use information gathered from the public to make informed decisions.

Develop the public involvement objectives from the specific circumstances of the project.

3. Project Stakeholders

Identify who might be interested in participating and whose participation is necessary for the department to make informed decisions. Also, identify the best channels of communication with stakeholders and what information these stakeholders need about the project.

4. Project Strategy

Identify the general approach for achieving the public involvement goals and objectives.

5. Tools and Techniques

Identify the tools and techniques to be used in carrying out the strategy for achieving the goals and objectives for the project.

6. Resources

Identify resources (including time and money) necessary to meet the goals and objectives. Determine if available resources are adequate or if you need to look for additional assistance.

7. Project Schedule

Detail the schedule necessary for public involvement activities. _____

8. Management

Record the structure for communication between everyone involved with implementing public involvement activities. Roles and responsibilities should also be identified. Who is doing what?

9. Evaluation

Identify methods and measurements for evaluating whether the strategy, tools and techniques are meeting the project's public involvement goals and objectives.

Chapter 2 Summary

In this chapter, we discussed the importance of scoping a project for public involvement and developing a public involvement plan. For effective public involvement, remember:

- Scoping public involvement and writing a public involvement plan for complex projects is vital to the success of a transportation project.
- Responses to scoping questions and the public involvement plan should be evaluated throughout the life of a project.
- In the public involvement plan, you detail the goals, objectives, strategies and tools to ensure that methods for soliciting public input are effective.
- Project managers, project team members, and public involvement consultants should use the forms provided in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Simple and Complex Projects

This chapter provides the following information:

- Understanding the complexity of a project
- Understanding the level of environmental evaluation needed
- Simple projects
 - Understanding criteria and types of simple projects
 - Planning public involvement for simple projects
 - Project activity flowchart for simple projects
- Complex projects
 - Understanding criteria and types of complex projects
 - Planning public involvement for complex projects
 - Project activity flowchart for complex projects
- Chapter summary

The Complexity of a Project

The development of highway projects involves considerable time and money. ITD must develop highway projects that are necessary, cost effective and within the approved policies of the department and the Federal Highway Administration. These projects are incorporated into a development program (STIP)⁵, which spans several years and reflects priorities established by needs, studies and long-range planning.

In the past, ITD has tended to treat all projects similarly, but some projects do not require as much scrutiny or approval from the state roadway design engineer or the Federal Highway Administration. The level of scrutiny and approval depends on whether a project is designated as simple or complex during concept scoping. The project concept team makes this determination. Once identified as complex or simple, the project can continue to be developed. Knowing the complexity will help you determine the level of public involvement needed and will help in developing a public involvement plan.

⁵ The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program is a staged, multi-year, intermodal program of transportation projects, which is consistent with the statewide transportation plan and contains the transportation improvement programs of the metropolitan planning organizations. In Idaho it is updated annually. For more information on this program, contact Idaho Transportation Department, Division of Transportation Planning, 334-8209. Also see <http://www2.state.id.us/itd/planning/>.

A project's designation of simple or complex is based on a number of criteria and the degree to which a project meets these criteria:

- Amount of construction involved and affected right-of-way
- Anticipated controversy
- Involvement of regulatory agencies
- Environmental impacts
- [Status on the stewardship plan](#)⁶

Levels of Environmental Evaluation Needed

Once the complexity of a project is determined, one of the first steps in project development is to begin the environmental evaluation process. The goal of the environmental evaluation process, similar to that of public involvement, is producing better decisions. Public involvement is integral to the environmental evaluation process. Initially, the district completes an [ITD-654](#) Environmental Evaluation checklist, which will lead to the level of documentation required for the environmental evaluation. There are three levels of documentation:

- [Categorical Exclusions](#) (CE): This document addresses actions or activities that do not significantly affect the environment.
- [Environmental Assessment](#) (EA): The EA addresses in detail those resources or features that could be significantly affected. The EA's primary purpose is to help determine whether an environmental impact statement (EIS) is necessary.
- [Environmental Impact Statement](#) (EIS): When a proposed project could significantly affect environmental resources, a detailed document called the EIS is prepared.

When a project requires an EA or the preparation of an EIS, the complexity is high and public involvement needs are great. There are specific legal requirements for public involvement during an EA and EIS.⁷ A summary of public involvement is required in all environmental evaluation documents submitted to the Federal Highway Administration. Appendix A provides more background regarding the National Environmental Policy Act.

⁶ An oversight agreement has been entered into by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Idaho Transportation Department. A stewardship plan has been developed as part of this agreement indicating ITD/FHWA oversight responsibilities.

⁷ [See Chapter 3, ITD 2001 Design Manual](#)

Simple Projects

Simple projects require only district concept approval. The complexity of a project can change as the project is developed. A simple project can become a complex project if public controversy arises or other changes occur. In that case, a public involvement plan must also be developed to reflect public hearings or other activities appropriate for complex projects. You might find it helpful to develop a public involvement plan, even if it's relatively brief, in case your simple project is redesignated as a complex one.

Understanding Criteria and Types of Simple Projects

For a project to be designated as simple, it must meet the following criteria:⁸

- Minor or insignificant R/W involvement
- No public controversy is anticipated.
- Environmental clearance is expected as Categorical Exclusion.
- Little or no involvement from regulatory agencies.
- Exempt status on Stewardship Plan

Note that cost is not a deciding factor.

Highway projects that qualify as simple are:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Rehabilitation/Restoration | • Minor intersection improvements |
| • CRABS | • Overlay |
| • Traffic signals | • Turn bays |
| • Minor widening | |

Examples: Minor resurfacing (Circle M), sealcoats, pavement maintenance, intersection improvement, safety (HES, RR, Etc.), minor bridge rehabilitation, minor widening.

Planning Public Involvement for Simple Projects

Public involvement, though generally limited for simple projects, is considered during the following steps in the project activity flowchart (see *Project Activity Flowchart* at the end of this section):

- [Concept scoping \(Design Manual 4.4.3\)](#)

⁸See Section 4.2.1, ITD 2001 Design Manual

- Public involvement process determination (*Design Manual 3.9* and *4.16*)
- Public information meeting needed (*Design Manual 4.16.3*)
- Public information meeting
- Hearing needed (*Design Manual 4.16.4*)
- Hearing waiver (*Design Manual 4.16.4*)

Concept
Scoping,
Sec. 4.4.3
(including
2708)

Concept Scoping. During concept scoping, the project manager and concept team determine the scope of a transportation project, as well as the public involvement needed. As a project manager, you strive to find the right balance of public involvement. While you don't want to underestimate the need for public involvement and information, you also don't want to overreact and build more into the process than is necessary to meet the goals and objectives of the project. Remember that flexibility is the key. As a project moves forward, you can modify the public involvement as needs change. But a good starting point will help you determine how the public involvement on a project must change to achieve the goals and objectives.

Public Involvement
Process Determination,
Sec. 3.9 and 4.16

Public Involvement Process Determination. Project managers can determine the public involvement process according to the three levels shown in Table 1. The following table is designed only to help you to understand the different levels of public involvement a simple project may require.

Table 1 Public involvement activities, simple projects

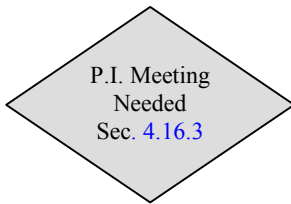
Levels	Public Involvement Activities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News release
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News release • Public meeting • One-on-one contacts with landowners or other stakeholders

A **Level 1** project does not require public involvement because decisions are expected to be easily made.

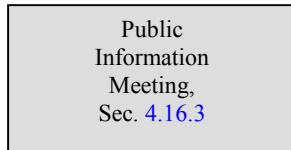
A **Level 2** project is one for which little public involvement is anticipated. A news release may be sufficient for explaining the transportation project and identifying the ITD point of contact for information.

A **Level 3** project may require that you implement several public involvement tools and techniques for a simple project. For example, you may develop a news release explaining the project and including the department contact. If you anticipate that the news release will create interest, you might also anticipate the need for an information meeting.

You have an array of public involvement activities available to you. You read a list of some of those activities in the last chapter. Again, remember that projects can change, and people can react differently than you anticipated. You can make adjustments as changes arise.



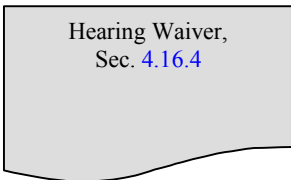
Public Information Meeting Needed. You may determine, during the previous step in the project activity flowchart, that the project should include a public information meeting. These meetings are often held as part of the development process for highway projects and allow you to share information and seek input. These meetings can be especially useful if a project has been postponed or changed in scope.



If you are holding a public information meeting, the next step in the project activity flowchart is to conduct that meeting. This meeting can be especially important since it will help you determine whether a public hearing will be necessary for the project. Guidelines for public information meetings are available in [Appendix F](#).



Hearing Needed. After the public information meeting, you may determine that a public hearing is warranted. Hearings are not required for resurfacing, widening lanes, adding auxiliary lanes, replacing grade separation structures, or installing traffic-control devices. If the project calls for a hearing, it will be redesignated as a complex project.



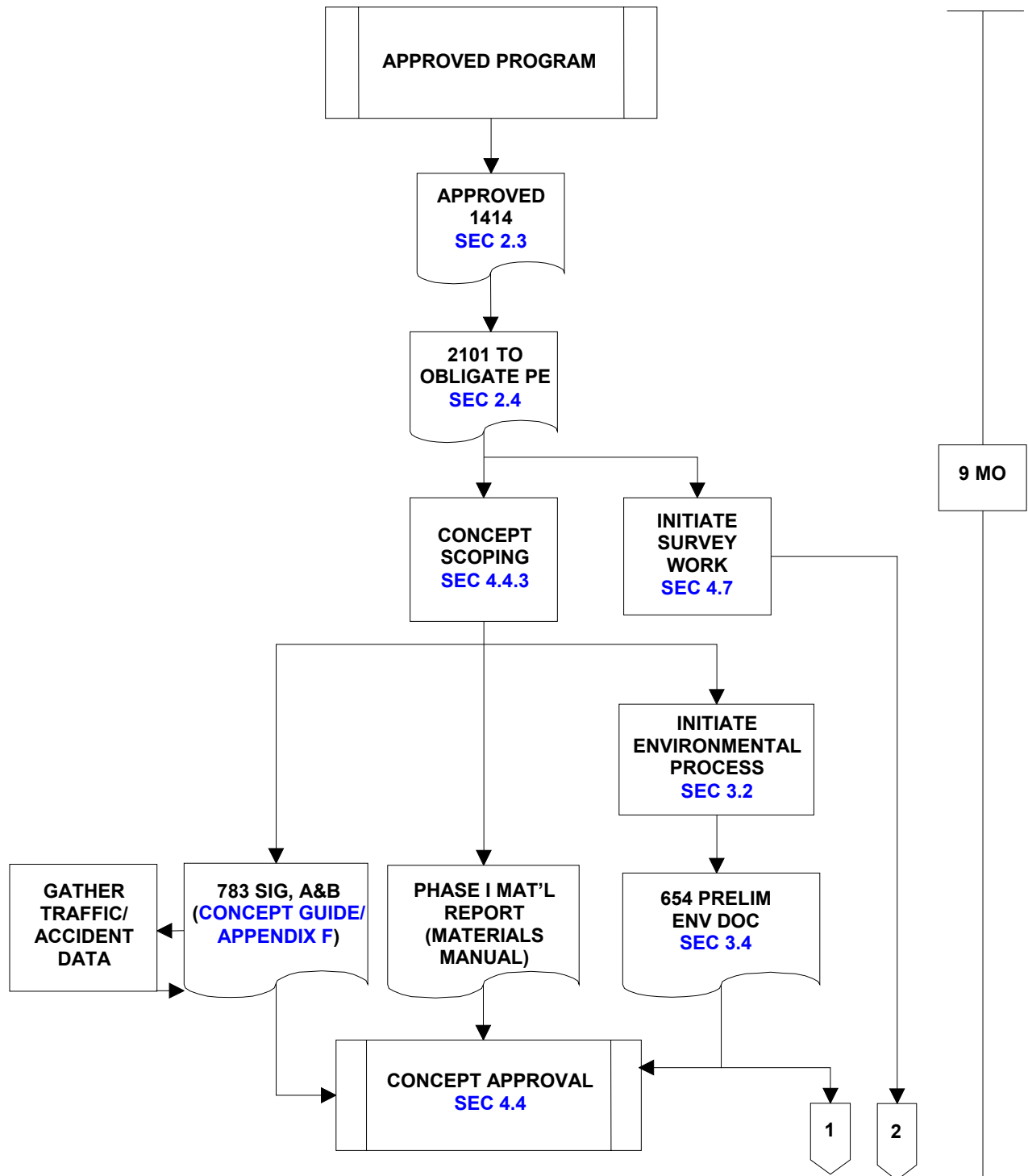
Hearing Waiver. The district engineer is authorized to recommend a waiver. Property owners may waive their right to have a public hearing. The hearing waiver must be in the form shown in Appendix F. The state roadway design engineer approves the waiver. A team of ITD personnel—the project designer and right-of-way agent, with additional district personnel as necessary—should make all contacts with landowners.

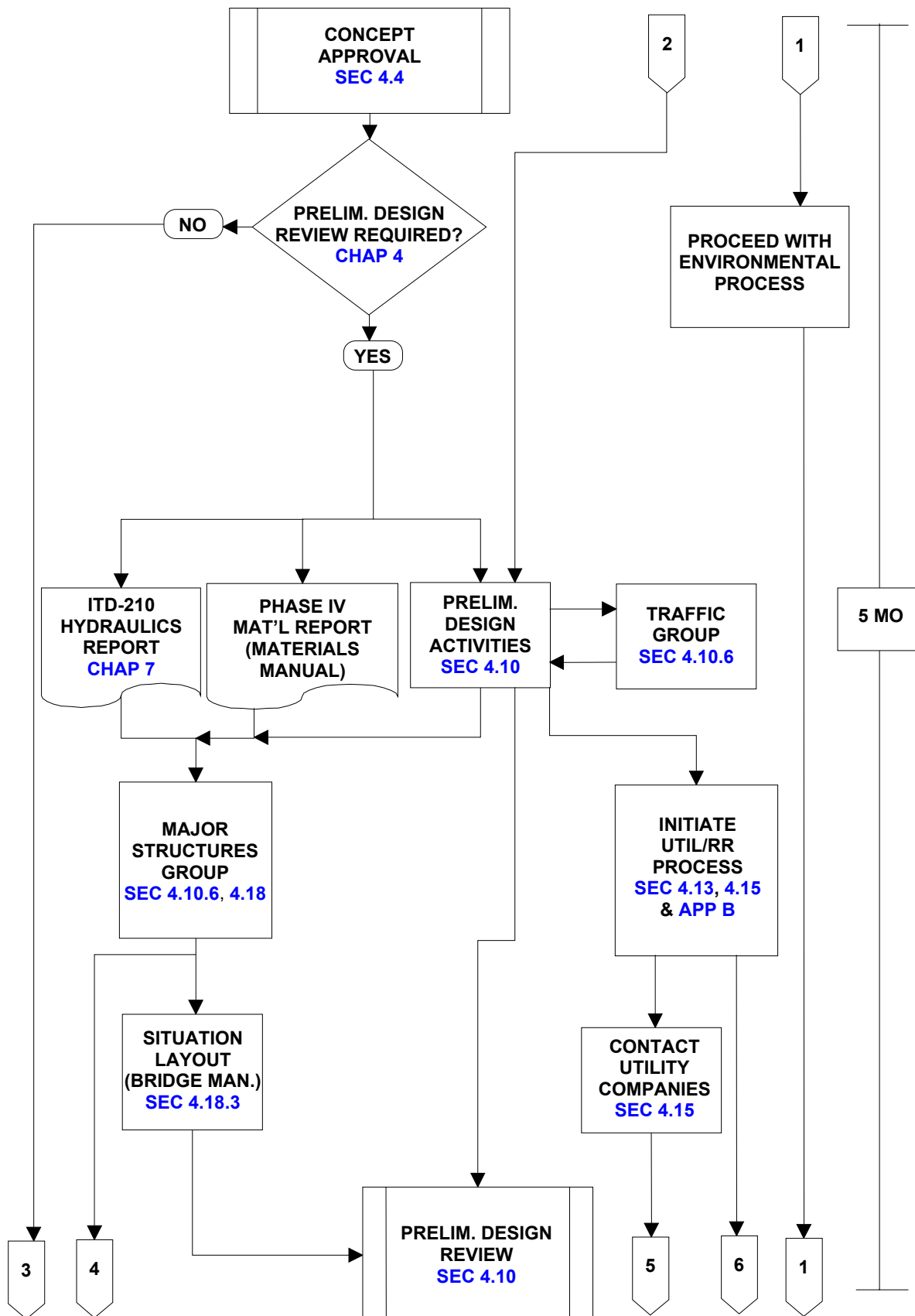
The following *Project Activity Flowchart: “Worst Case” Simple Type Project* is directly from the ITD Design Manual and documents the project development process.

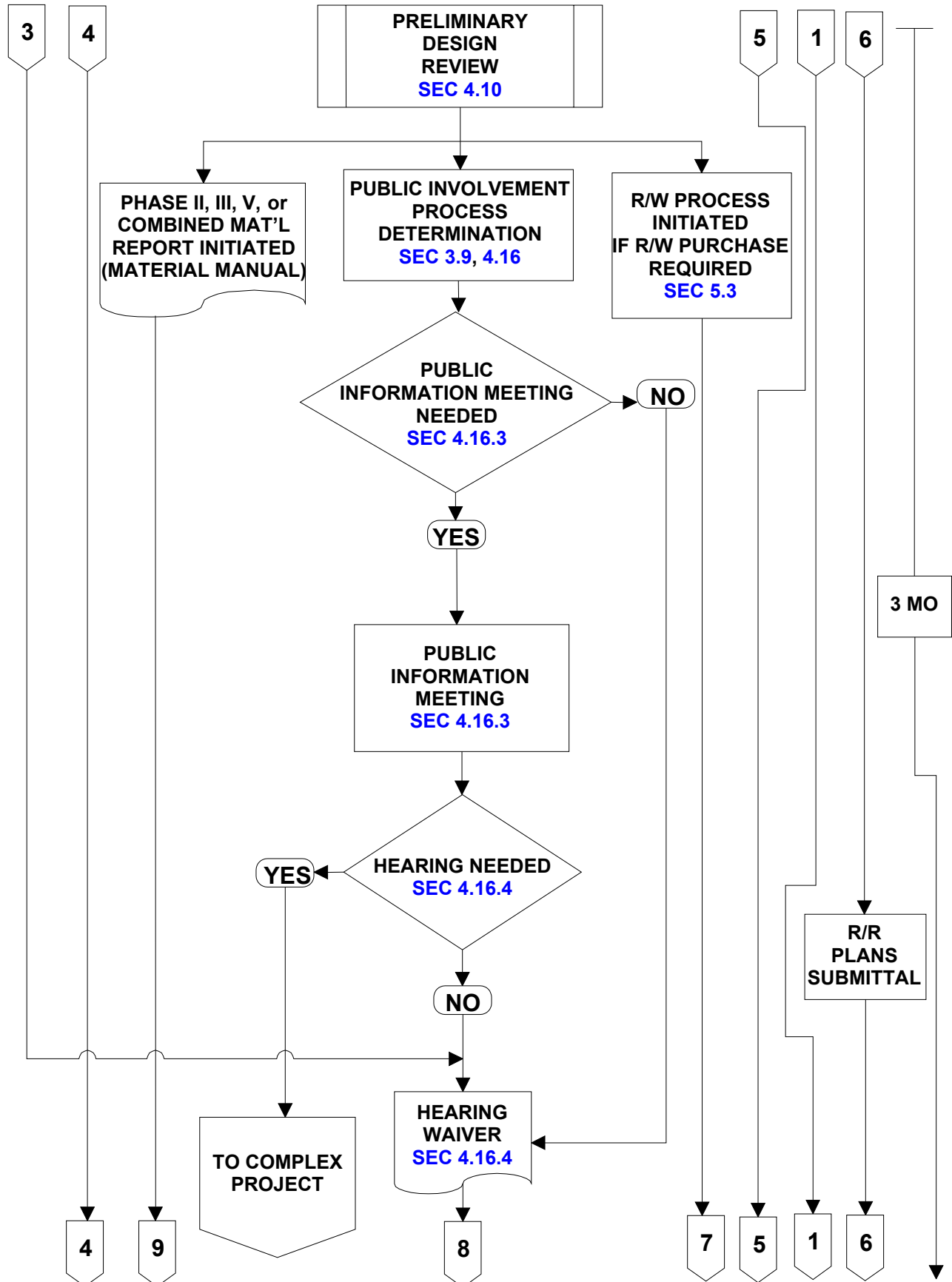
PROJECT ACTIVITY FLOWCHART

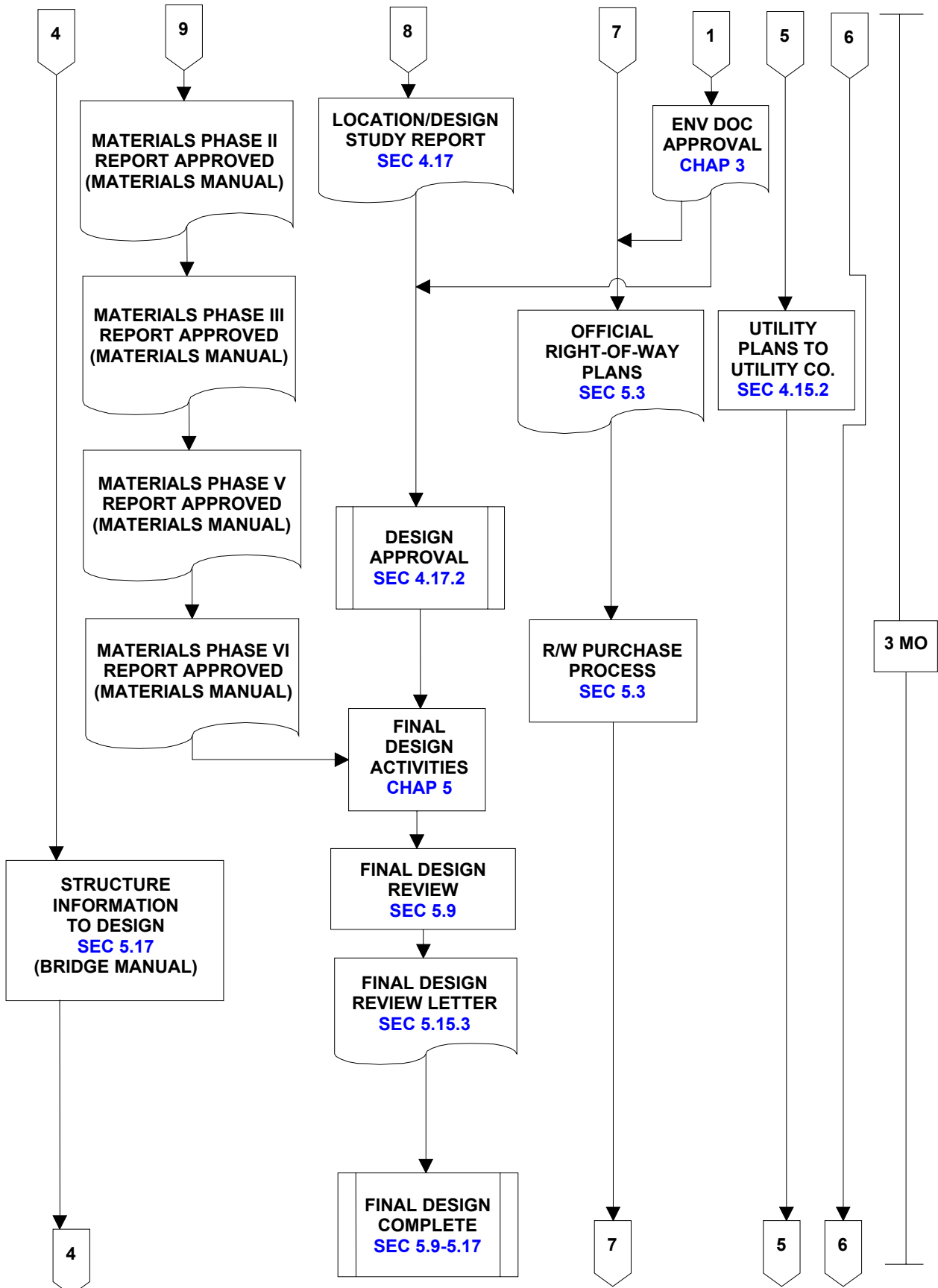
“WORST CASE” SIMPLE TYPE PROJECT

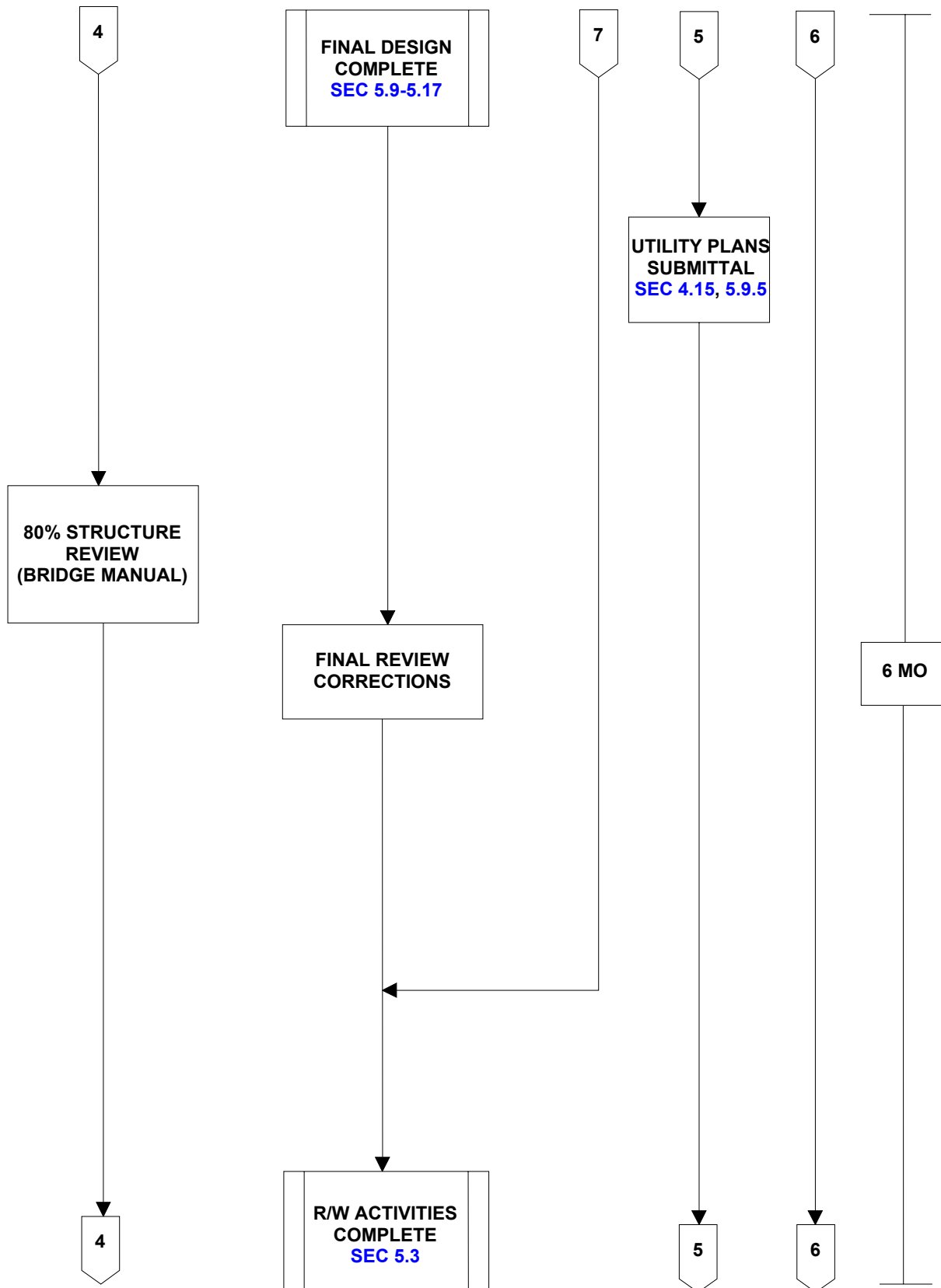
Time Line is for non-resource restricted
personnel estimated at 60% efficiency

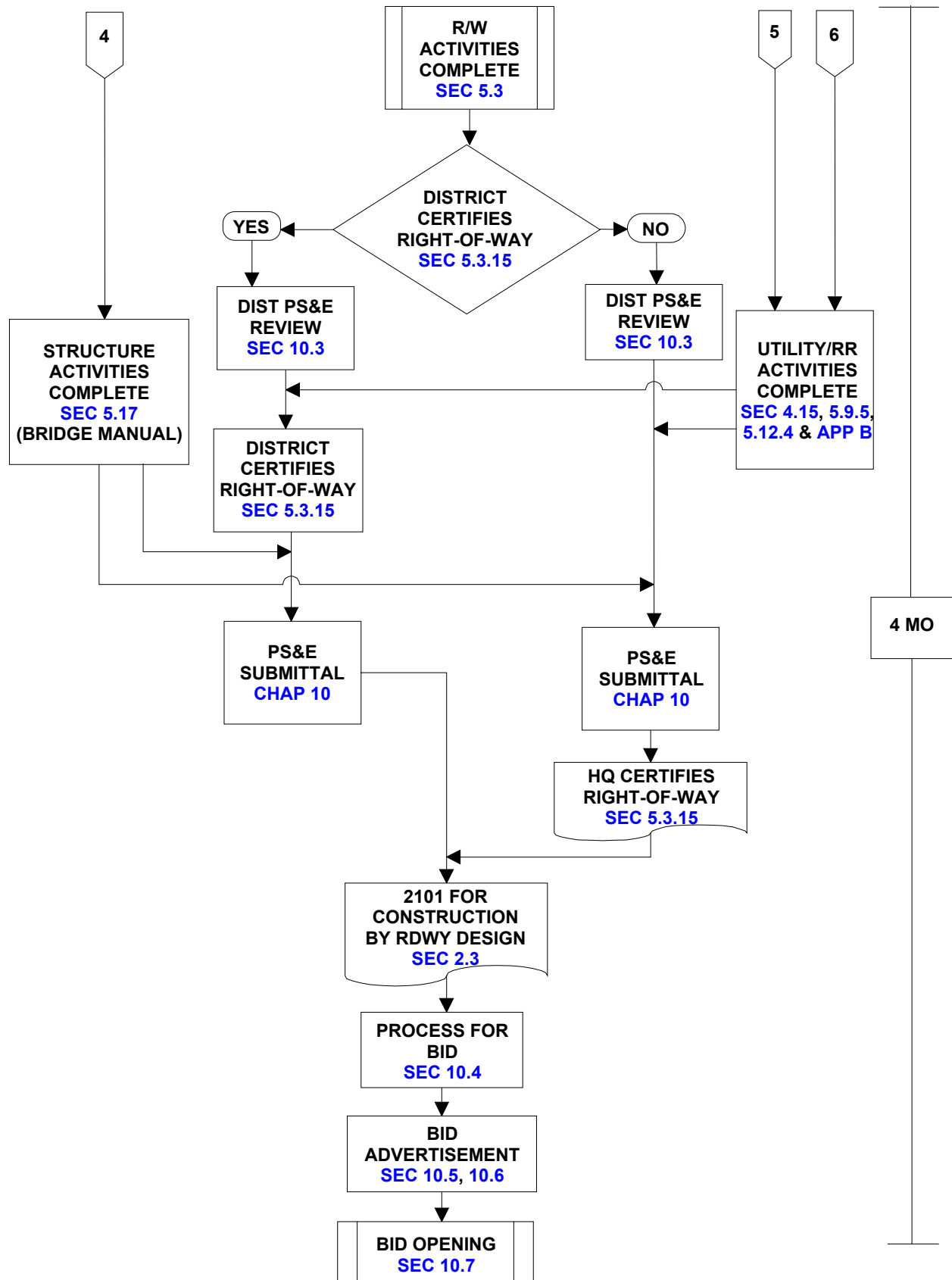












Complex Projects

ITD headquarters and the Federal Highway Administration must approve complex projects, which are often developed by numerous people, both within and outside ITD. Complex projects require public involvement plans.

Understanding Criteria and Types of Complex Projects

For a project to be designated as complex, it must meet the following criteria:⁹

- Environmental clearance expected as EA or EIS
- Have or expect public involvement
- Require Hearing
- Require System Action
- Major R/W involvement

Revisiting of the concept and any changes made to the concept could result in a change of “simple” to “complex,” or vice versa.

Highway projects that qualify as complex are:

- New routes
- New alignments
- Reconstruction

Examples: New interchange, new alignment, couplet, major urban intersection, new replacement bridge.

Planning Public Involvement for Complex Projects

Public involvement efforts are required for complex projects. Public involvement efforts are considered during the following steps in the project activity flowchart (see *Project Activity Flowchart* at the end of this section):

- Concept scoping (*Design Manual 4.4.3*)
- Prepare public involvement plan (*Chapter 2 of this guide*)
- Public information meeting (*Design Manual 4.16.13*)
- Location hearing needed
- Hold location hearing

⁹ See Section 4.2.2, ITD 2001 Design Manual

- Design hearing needed (*Design Manual 4.16.4*)
- Waiver of hearing (*Design Manual 4.16.4*)
- Hold hearing (*Design Manual 4.16.4*)
- Location/design study report (*Design Manual 4.17*)

Concept
Scoping, Sec.
4.4.3
(including
ITD 2708)

Concept Scoping. During concept scoping, project managers and the project concept team determine the scope of a transportation project, as well as the public involvement likely to be needed. Scoping complex projects will require more effort than scoping simple projects. Project managers and project concept team members must strive to find the right balance of public involvement. While you don't want to underestimate the need for public involvement and information, you also don't want to overreact and build more into the process than is necessary to meet the goals and objectives of a public involvement plan.

Prepare Public
Involvement Plan
(*P.I. Guide*)

Prepare Public Involvement Plan. All complex projects require public involvement plans. After a project has been scoped, ITD project managers, district planners, the public involvement coordinator, and possibly public involvement consultants determine the public involvement needs and document them. As a project moves forward, the plan can be modified as needs change. Once public involvement plan is complete it needs to be submitted to Headquarters Office of Public Affairs public involvement coordinator. Updates to the plan should also be submitted.

Scoping and the environmental evaluation will determine the level of public involvement a project needs. A project's public involvement needs will typically fall within one of the levels identified in Table 2. Levels 4, 5 and 6 generally parallel the environmental evaluations—categorical exclusion (CE), environmental assessment (EA), and environmental impact statement (EIS)—described earlier in this chapter (see “Levels of Environmental Evaluation”). Public involvement must be conducted in conjunction with environmental studies to satisfy NEPA, requirements. A number of factors—unique issues, degree of public interest, degree of other agency interest and others—will help you decide which public activities listed as possibilities in Table 2, are most appropriate for a specific highway project.¹⁰

¹⁰ For more detailed information regarding NEPA public involvement requirements contact the public involvement coordinator or Headquarters Environmental Section.

Table 2 Public involvement activities, complex projects

Levels	Public Involvement Activities*
4 (Categorical Exclusion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public involvement plan • News releases • One-on-one contacts (public officials, interest groups, property owners) • Meetings with landowners • Public meeting • Presentation • News release announcing final decisions (and tentative construction dates)
5 (Categorical Exclusion/ Environmental Assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public involvement plan • Stakeholder/mailling list • Project phone hotline (possibly) • Web page (possibly) • Presentation • Media strategy (news releases, editorial boards, graphics, radio and TV contacts) • One-on-one contacts (public officials, interest groups, property owners, civic organizations) • Surveys • Meetings with landowners • Project brochures, newsletters, and project logo (possibly) • Project video (possibly) • Public information meetings (present project, outline public involvement process, provide project information and receive public input) • Project workshops to receive input on location and environmental issues • Public hearing • News release and stakeholder mailing announcing final decisions and tentative construction dates

6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public involvement plan
(Environmental Assessment/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder/mailling list
Environmental Impact Statement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project phone hot line (possibly) • Web page (possibly) • Media strategy (news releases, editorial boards, graphics, radio and TV contacts) • Federal Register Notice of Intent • Project advisory committee • One-on-one contracts (public officials, interest groups, property owners, civic organizations) • Meetings with landowners • Surveys • Project brochures, newsletter, logo (possibly) • Project video (possibly) • Presentation • Public meeting (present project, outline public involvement process, provide project information and receive public input) • Public meetings for scoping, identifying alternatives, findings of significant issues • Project workshops to receive input on location and environmental issues • Public hearing • News release and stakeholder mailing announcing final decisions and tentative construction dates

**Activities are not in a specific order and may reoccur throughout the process.*

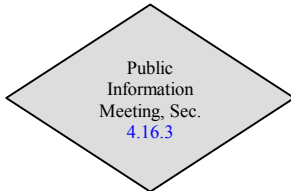
A **Level 4** project is one for which public involvement is anticipated, though it is not likely to be controversial. Proactive and meaningful public involvement activities will help a project run on time and within budget. They will also reduce the need for Level 5 activities.

A **Level 5** project is one for which public involvement is anticipated and likely to be controversial. A public hearing may be necessary.

A **Level 6** project is extremely complex and requires a high degree of public involvement. A public hearing is necessary.

There is considerable overlap among strategies and tools available for involving the public on Level 4, 5, and 6 projects. Public involvement can

take place in informal settings, at public meetings¹¹, during one-on-one contacts, or through correspondence, as well as through a formal public hearing process. Informal public involvement often promotes the most productive interaction with the public and can be an effective means of interaction. On the other hand, the formal hearing process, required for some projects, allows formal comments to be officially registered. Both informal and formal activities and public comments need to be documented.



Public Information Meeting. Public information meetings and workshops allow the department to share information and seek input from various stakeholder groups. Once the purpose and number of public information meetings has been determined, the meeting or meetings can be held. Meetings help you to determine whether a public hearing will be necessary. Because there are several types of public meetings, you can determine the format most appropriate for the project. For example, on a project requiring an EA, the department may conduct public workshops.

Hold Public Information Meeting, Sec. 4.16.3

Guidelines for public information meetings are included in [Appendix F](#). For further discussion or assistance with planning workshops or other collaborative techniques, refer to *Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-making*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, September 1996.

Public Hearings. ITD's project manager, district engineer and roadway design engineer in headquarters determine whether a project needs a public hearing. Sometimes, the need for a public hearing is determined only after the public meetings have been held. In some cases, public hearings are required and therefore identified during the concept scoping.

The Federal Highway Administration can also determine that a hearing is necessary when it is in the public interest or when any of the following actions are possible:

- Significant amounts of right-of-way must be acquired.
- The layout or function of the connecting roadways or facilities being improved could be substantially changed.
- Abutting property could be adversely affected, or litigation or public controversy is anticipated.

¹¹ In this guidebook the term *public meeting* is used to describe any meeting with the public, whether it is an informational meeting or workshop.

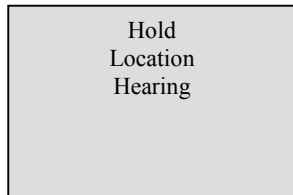
- There would be significant social, economic and/or environmental effects on the surrounding area.

Other projects are completely financed with state funds. Public hearings must be held for these projects when any of the following actions are possible:

- The state highway serving or traversing any city is to be abandoned, relocated, or replaced.
- There is significant public interest or controversy surrounding the project.

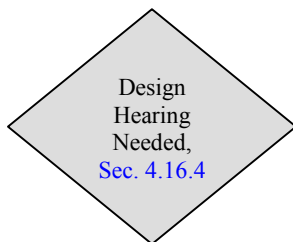
There are several kinds of public hearings. Two of those—location hearings and design hearings—are discussed below. Guidelines for planning and holding a public hearing are provided in Appendix F.

Typically, the following location and design hearings are combined.



Location Hearing Needed. ITD holds location hearings to ensure that project locations are consistent with federal, state and local goals and objectives and that the public has ample opportunity to provide input. Because a location hearing is held before the department commits to a specific route, the community can help decide the location for a project having several alternatives. The location is determined based on a full consideration of transportation needs, socioeconomic and environmental factors, and formal testimony given at the location hearing.

Typically, location hearings are not required unless the project requires an individual [Section 404 Permit](#).¹²



Design Hearing Needed. A design hearing is held after the department approves a route location but before the department is committed to a specific design. This type of hearing is held after major design features are identified and outlined on the plans. Alternate proposals of major design features may be presented.

¹² See section 3-8-11 [Section 404 Permit](#), ITD 2001 [Design Manual](#). Any federal aid project requiring an individual 404 permit must also complete the outlined steps in the section 404/NEPA wetland merger agreement.

Waiver of Hearing
Sec. 4.16.4

Waiver of Hearing. Only the district engineer can recommend a waiver. The state roadway design engineer must approve it. A hearing waiver may be solicited from affected landowners regardless of the amount of right-of-way. ITD personnel—the project designer and right-of-way agent, with additional district personnel as necessary—should make all contacts with landowners. The hearing waiver must be in the form shown in [Appendix F](#).

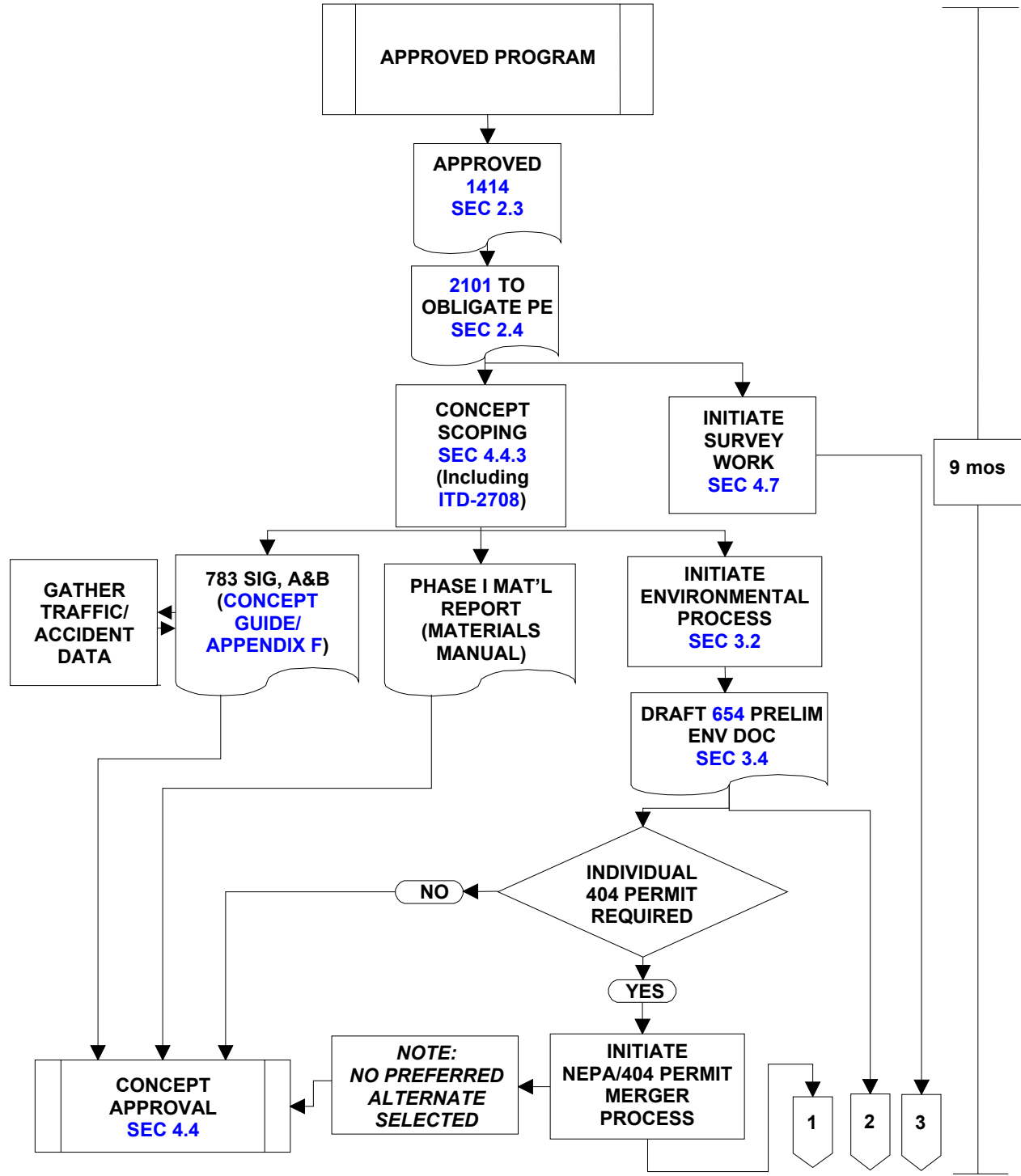
Location/Design
Study Report
Sec. 4.17

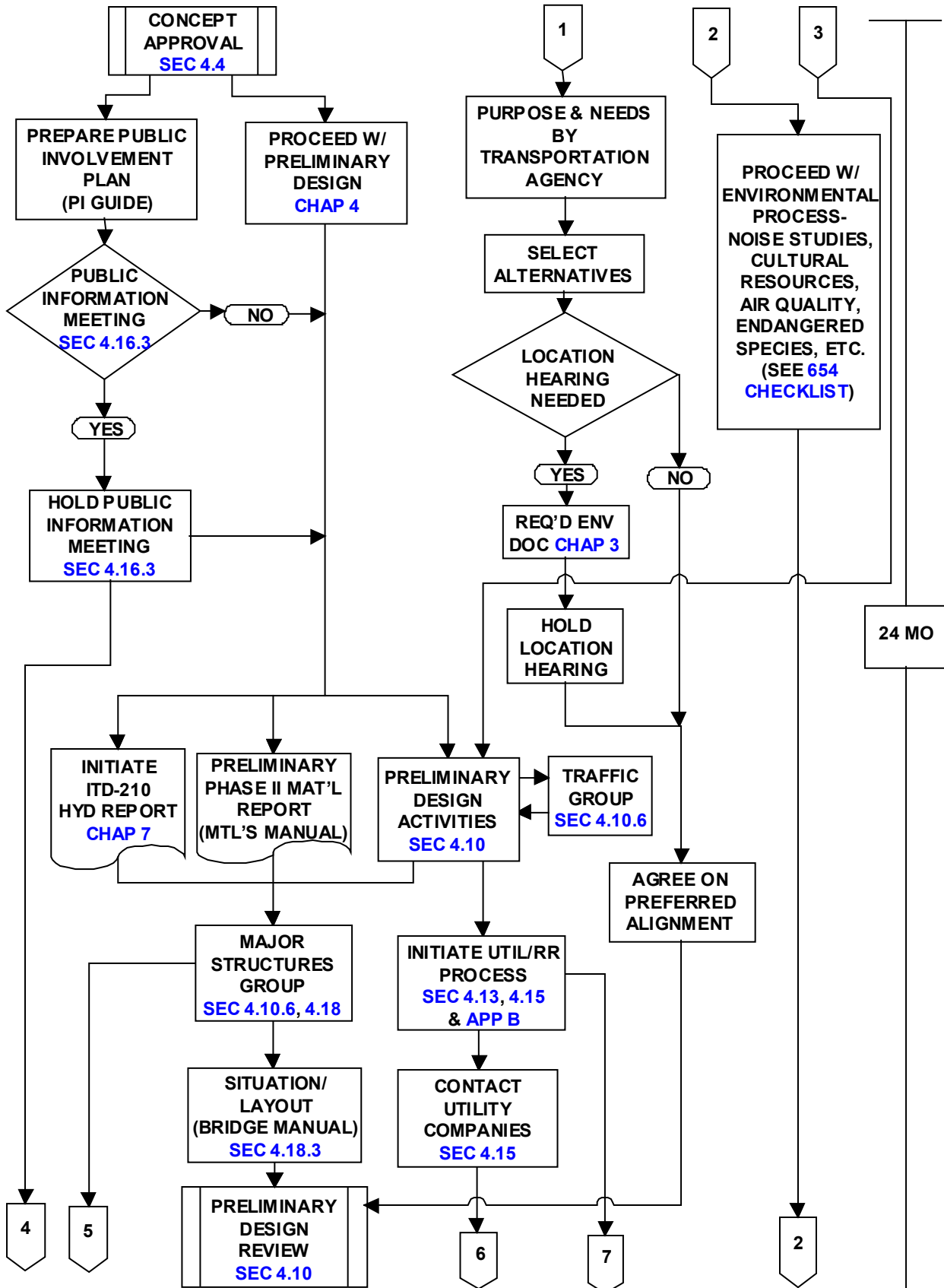
Location/Design Study Report. The district engineer prepares a location/design study report. This formal document records considerations and conclusions that were reached by the district as it developed the project, including the processes for environmental documentation, preliminary design and public hearings. This report is required to obtain design approval and must summarize the project's public involvement, including recommendations and proposed changes resulting from public involvement activities.

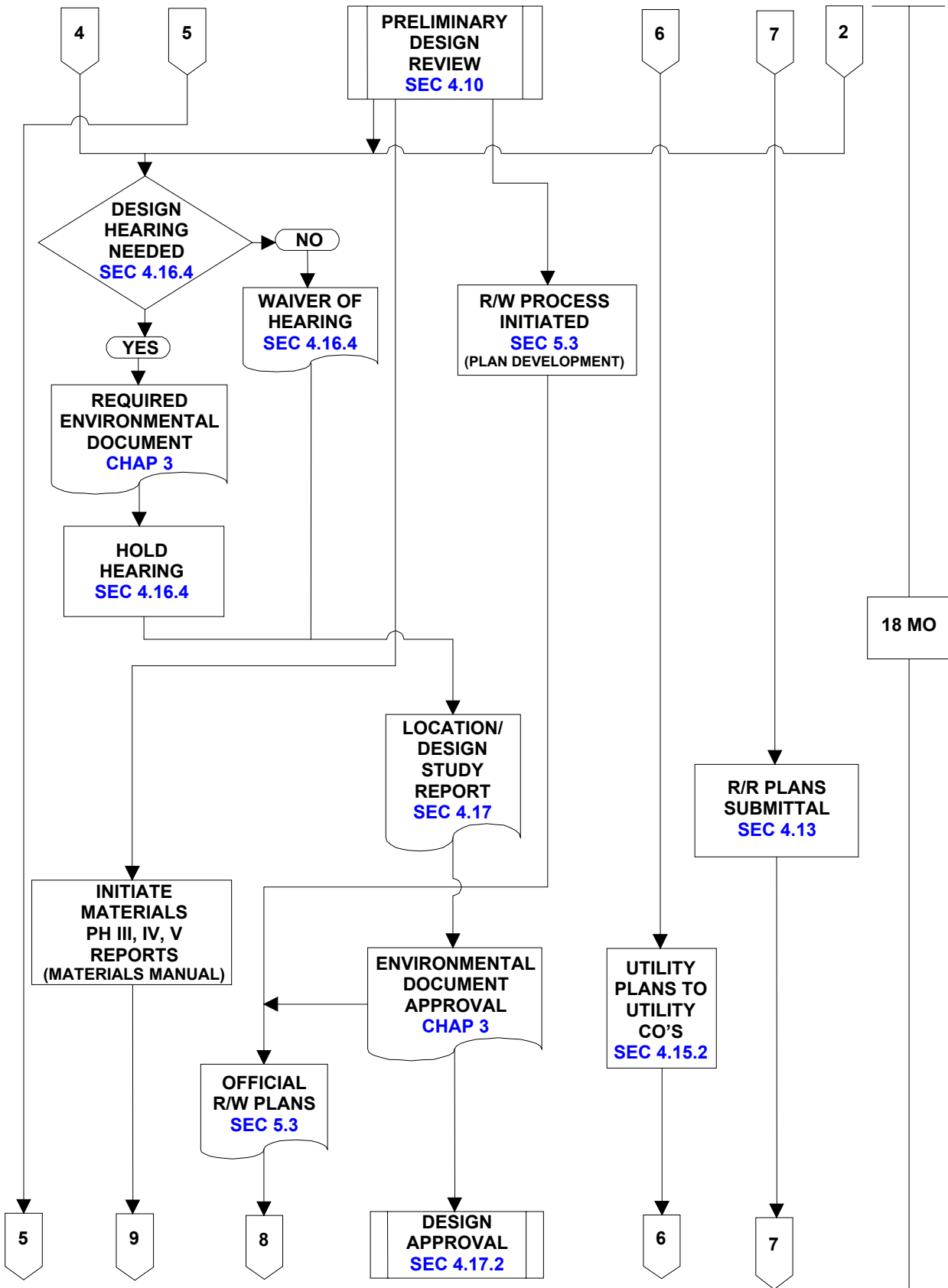
The following *Project Activity Flowchart: "Typical" Complex Project* is directly from the ITD Design Manual and documents the project development process.

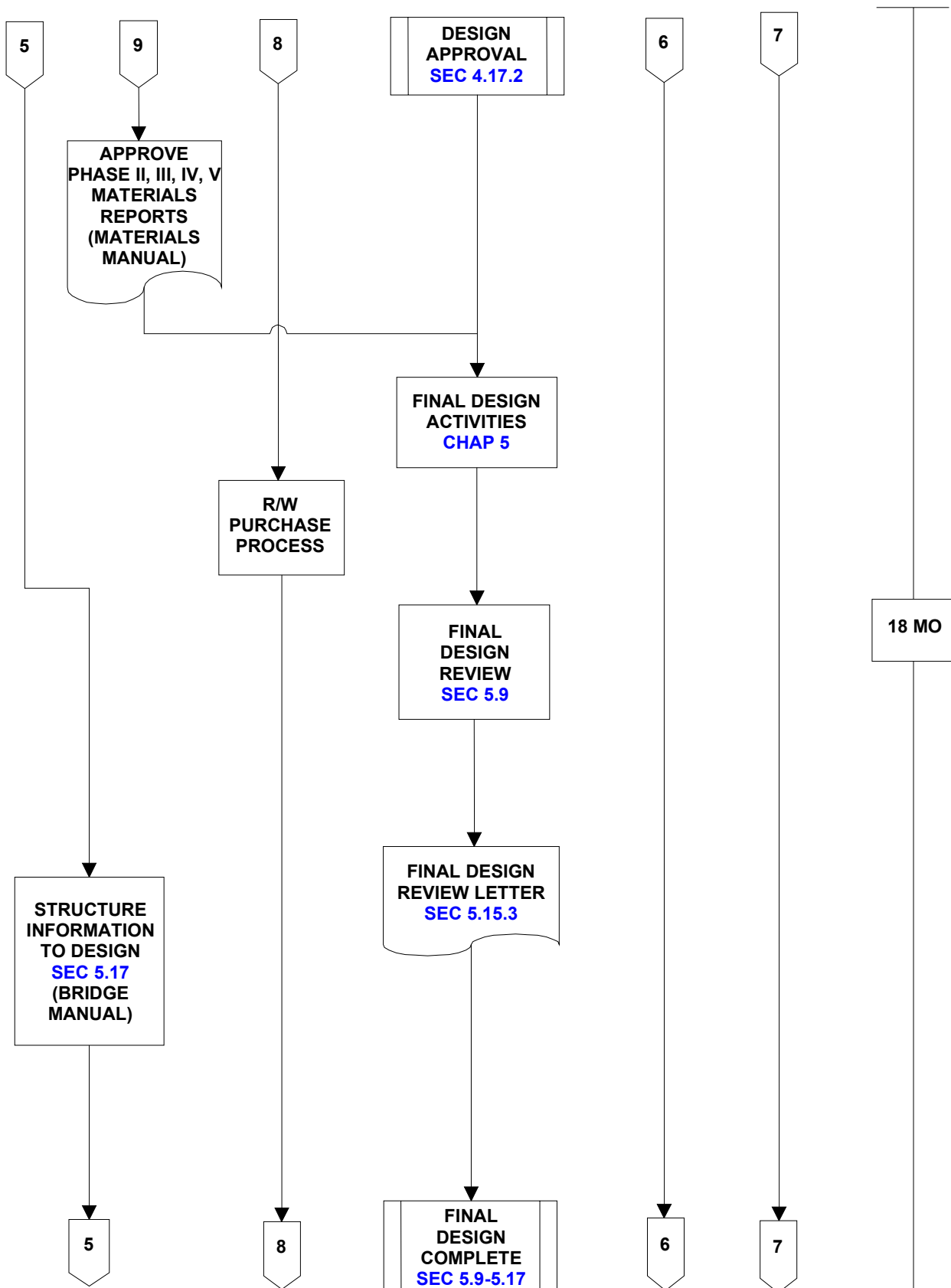
PROJECT ACTIVITY FLOWCHART

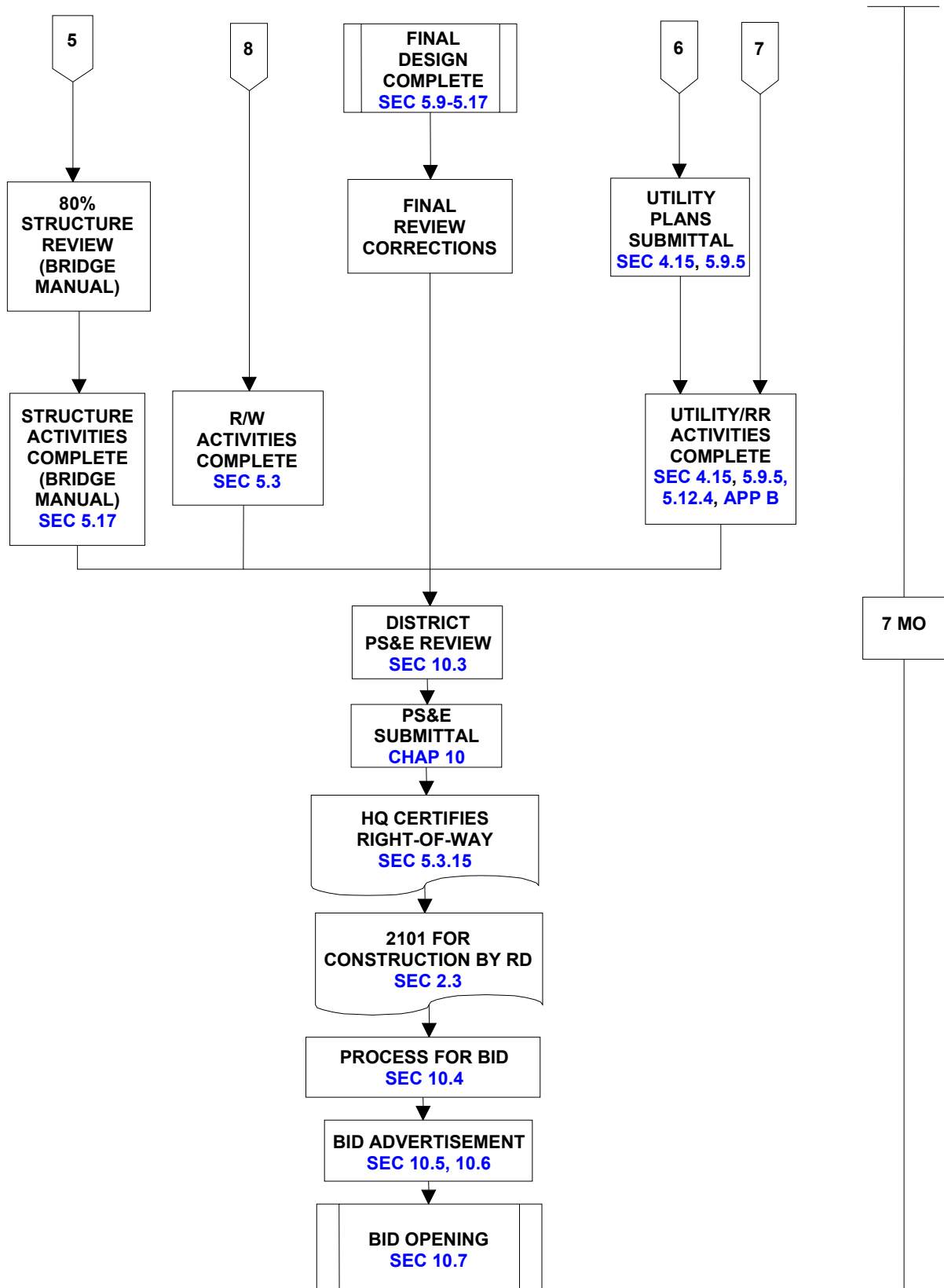
"TYPICAL" COMPLEX PROJECT
 Time Line is for 5 mile reconst/realign
 30 parcels R/W
 EA/FONSI w/individual 404 permit
 non-resource restricted
 personnel estimated at 60% efficiency











Sample Public Involvement Plans

Sample Plan **Simple Project—Level 3** **Mountain Valley to Spring Shores**

Project name: **Mountain Valley to Spring Shores**

Project manager: **John Smith**

Project location: **Mountain Valley**

Project number: **000-000-000**

Key number: **00-00-000**

1. Project Introduction

The purpose of this project is to rehabilitate 1.5 miles of the roadway between Mountain Valley and Spring Shores. The road is badly deteriorated and full of potholes. Construction is set for summer of 2001. This is a simple project. Public involvement is anticipated, but expected to be minimal.

In a 1995 CRABS project in Mountain Valley the community became very upset because they did not know about the project before it began. They had an expectation that when ITD repaired the road additional improvements could be made. Because of this history ITD believes it is necessary to conduct a public involvement process.

2. Goals and Objectives of Public Involvement on the Project

Goals:

- Gather the concerns and needs of the public to be considered during the decision making process.
- Use information gathered from the public to make informed decisions.
- Inform and educate the public about the scope of the project.

Objectives:

- To gather input from the community of Mountain Valley during the CRABS project's development process.
- Understand how best to minimize the inconvenience to Mountain Valley residents and the traveling public during the scheduled improvements.
- Inform the public of the scope of the project

3. Project Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Communication Channels
Mountain Valley and Spring Shores city councils	One-on one phone calls, letters, newspaper ads, city council meetings, public meeting, press release
Mountain Valley and Spring Shores mayors and city public work's staff	One-on-one phone calls, letters, newspaper ads, city council meetings, public meeting, press release
State legislators	One-on-one phone calls, letters, newspaper ads, city council meetings, public meeting, press release
Business and property owners adjacent to the project	One-on-one phone calls, letters, newspaper ads, public meeting, press release
Traveling public	Newspaper ad, public meeting, press release

4. Project Strategy

A series of personal contacts (phone calls and letters) will be made with community leaders, businesses, and homeowners adjacent to this project. We will conduct a public informational meeting. We will also send a press release to the local media.

5. Tools and Techniques

- Printed Materials:
 - Letters
 - Display ads
 - Press releases

- One-on-one meetings or phone calls
 - Local elected official
 - Mayor
 - Business & property owners adjacent to project
- Public information meeting
 - One meeting only to inform and receive input from the public

6. Resources

- The project budget includes funds to produce public involvement materials and conduct activities.
- Because the project was designed in-house, the project manager and public involvement coordinator will work together to conduct all public involvement activities.

7. Project Schedule

Activity	Day	Integrate into CPM
Arrange date for public meeting and assign ITD staff to attend	75	
Contact mayors, council members and business/homeowners (two months before informational meeting)	75-40	
Find a location for the meeting	35	
Arrange for ITD graphic artist to create display ad (schedule two months before the date of the informational meeting)	35	
Attend city council meetings	30	YES
Send letter and press release and place ad (one month before meeting)	28	
Arrange for refreshments (punch and cookies can be bought the same day)	26	

Activity	Day	Integrate into CPM
Check that ads will run and meeting room is reserved (2 weeks out)	19	
Hold meeting	5	YES
Letter to mayor, city council, adjacent business and property owners about final decision and presenting a tentative construction schedule	1	
Send press release announcing final decision and presenting a tentative construction schedule	1	

8. Management

- The project manager will work with the public involvement coordinator to set up the public meeting.
- The public involvement coordinator will be invited to project meetings or region staff meeting.
- The public involvement coordinator will take care of all public involvement tasks (letters, display ad and press releases) in coordination with the project manager.
- The project manager will arrange for ITD staff from design, traffic and other needed divisions to be available to answer questions at the public meeting.
- The public involvement coordinator will document all public involvement activities.
- The project manager and public involvement coordinator will review the documentation and address any concerns before construction begins.

9. Evaluation

- The project manager and public involvement coordinator will meet to evaluate the public involvement activities prior to and after the public meeting.
- The project manager and the public involvement coordinator will evaluate the public involvement process at the end of the project

Sample Plan
Complex Project—Level 4
U.S. 205: Timberline to Snowy Creek

Project name: **U.S.-205: Timberline to Snowy Creek**

Project manager: **John Smith**

Project location: **Mountain Valley**

Project number: **000-000-000**

Key number: **00-00-000**

1. Project Introduction

This project is a complex project requiring the use of an outside design consultant. Public involvement will be scoped, planned, and conducted by the department. This project requires public involvement, though it is not likely to be controversial.

ITD is reconstructing 1 mile of existing U.S.-205 from Timberline to Snowy Creek. This section of U.S.-205 is in a rural area and leads to the new high-end subdivision of Snowy Creek. The purpose of the reconstruction is to improve safety and efficiency. The existing road is 27 feet wide with no shoulders and the pavement is deteriorating. U.S. 205 Timberline to Snowy Creek runs parallel to King City.

Truck traffic is heavy and speeding is an issue along this stretch of road. ITD has received a significant number of complaints from both the public and local elected officials about speeding and safety. Local citizens are concerned about the safety of local traffic and access to an adjacent middle school. ITD has a reputation in King City for announcing decisions and not conducting public involvement activities.

This project has the potential to become controversial. It is important that ITD make known that the local communities views and needs have been incorporated into the development of this project. The local elected officials disagree on speed limit and the road surface width. Controversy could arise if the perception emerges that decisions or information is being shared with some elected officials and not others. The local community is concerned with long-term growth and the additional traffic using this road once improvements are made. Working as a team with this community, ITD can address the concerns of the community and develop this project on time and on budget.

2. Goals and Objectives of Public Involvement on the Project

Goals:

- Gather the concerns and needs of the public to be considered during the project's decision making process.
- Use information gathered from the public to make informed decisions.

Objectives

1. Engage the Mountain Valley residents in ITD's development process so it is evident their views and needs have been considered in project decisions.
2. Establish and publicize lines of communication.
3. Interact with and incorporate the trucking industry's needs and concerns into the decision making process.
4. Outreach to the local school administration and parents to learn and address their concerns.

3. Project Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Communication Channels
Local community	Local newspaper, direct mail, public information meetings
King City mayor, city council and city public work's staff	Direct mail, one-on-one meetings, meetings, local community meetings, City Council meetings, public information meetings
State legislators	One-on-one phone calls, letters, newspaper ads, public meeting, press release
ITD district board member	One-on-one phone calls, letters, newspaper ads, public meeting, press release
Local transportation advisory committee	Direct mail, committee meeting, public information meetings
Homeowners	One-on-one phone calls or personal contacts, letters, newspaper ads, public meeting, press release
Traveling public	Newspaper, billboards, signage, public information meetings

Stakeholders	Communication Channels
Trucking industry	Direct mail to local processing plants, phone calls, update ITD Port of Entries/Weigh stations, public information meetings
Local school administration and parents	Direct mail, one-on-one meetings, school administration meetings, PTA meetings, flyers sent home with students, public information meetings

Note: More detailed and ongoing information will be presented to the mayor, city council and King City's local transportation advisory committee.

4. Project Strategy

ITD's general approach to the public involvement for this project will begin with publicizing how to get information and give input. This will be accomplished through a series of one-on-one meetings, mailings, press releases and ads. Several public meetings will be held to inform the public about the public involvement process, the project, and to gather input. ITD will also post notices on the local billboard.

The project manager will attend King City local transportation advisory committee meetings and PTA meetings throughout the development of this project. With a strong local presence, ITD can engage the local community and demonstrate how input is incorporated into the development of the project.

ITD will contact the trucking industry representatives and Ports of Entry. In addition ITD will make a personal contact with several processing and manufacturing plants located near the project.

This project should not be controversial. The community has been asking for improvements for many years. The trucking industry and traveling public understand the improvements and believe they are needed.

The design consultant will participate in the public involvement activities at the request of the project manager.

5. Tools and Techniques

- Stakeholder mailing list (an initial project mailing list has been developed at the district. This mailing list will be updated throughout the project.)
- Printed materials
 - Letter of introduction and updates
 - Project fact sheet
 - Letter informing stakeholders of decisions
 - School flyer
 - Display ads for newspaper
 - Press releases
 - Presentation
 - Display boards for one-on-one and public meetings
- One-on-one meetings (Small group meetings or one-on-one meetings will be held as needed to discuss individual issues or specific community concerns.)
 - King City mayor
 - School administration (Middle school staff meetings are on Tuesdays at 3:45pm.)
 - King City, city council (city council meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month. The first hour is a briefing meeting, the second hour is a formal meeting, followed by open public comment.)
 - PTA (PTA meets the first Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the school cafeteria.)
- Public information meetings
 - First meeting will be held to outline the public involvement process, discuss and obtain input to project scope and initial designs and respond to issues.
 - Second meeting will be held to discuss and obtain input of proposed design and respond to issues.
 - Additional meetings will be held if needed. (The public involvement team will meet to evaluate process and determine if additional meetings are necessary.)

6. Resources

- Project budget includes funds to produce public involvement materials and conduct activities.
- The project budget includes resources to produce printed materials and conduct public meetings.
- All the public involvement activities will be produced and conducted by ITD staff.
- Assistance from the ITD public involvement coordinator is needed.

7. Project Schedule

Activity	Day	Integrate into CPM
Refine stakeholder mailing list	200	
Develop project letter of introduction, fact sheet, display ad, press release, presentation materials and display boards	200-165	
Send letter of introduction and fact sheet to stakeholders	160	
Send press release and display ad to local newspaper for first public meeting	160	YES
Meet with mayor (If possible meet the same day with city council.)	155	
Meet with city council (If possible meet the same day with the mayor.)	155	
Meet with Local Transportation Advisory Committee	152	
Attend PTA and school administration meeting	150	
Hold public meeting	130	YES
Meet with or phone mayor	125	
Meet with or phone chairman of the city council	125	
Meet with Local Transportation Advisory Committee	115	
Prepare and send display ad to local newspaper for second public meeting	100	YES
Send second letter to stakeholders including a notice of the second public meeting	100	YES

Activity	Day	Integrate into CPM
Hold second public meeting	55	YES
Meet with mayor	40	
Meet with city council	40	
Meet with Local Transportation Advisory Committee	25	
Attend PTA and school administration meeting	24	
Send final letter to stakeholders informing stakeholders of decisions	1	YES
Send press release announcing final decision and presenting a tentative construction schedule	1	

8. Management

- The public involvement team (project manager, public involvement coordinator, planners and design consultant) will meet to review and approve public involvement plan.
- Team will meet on an as needed basis in the district conference room.
- All activities will be coordinated with project manager.
- The design consultant will coordinate all meeting with local community and project manger.
- Any informal feedback received during the project will be forwarded immediately to the project manager. This information will be discussed during team meetings.
- The public involvement coordinator will assist the project manager with producing printed materials and planning the public meeting and documented by the project manager.
- The public involvement team will review documentation and Location/Design study report before submitted.

9. Evaluation

- The public involvement team will meet after each public meeting to evaluate public involvement activities.
- The team will participate in all public information meetings and plan to meet after the meeting or soon after to evaluate the effectiveness of the public information meeting.
- An evaluation meeting will be held upon completion of project.

Sample Plan
Complex Project—Level 5
Eastlake Alternate Route-Environmental Assessment

Project name: **Eastlake Alternate Route**

Project manager: **John Smith**

Project location: **U.S. 207 through Eastlake (King County)**

Project number: **000-000-000**

Key number: **00-00-000**

1. Project Introduction

This project is a complex project requiring the use of an outside design consultant and public involvement consultant. This project is not likely to be controversial.

Project Introduction

The project proposes relocation and improvement of U.S. 207 through Eastlake. The existing route of U.S. 207 crosses the Eastlake River and proceeds north into town on 25th street. At the junction of 25th and Main Street, the route turns west on Main and proceeds to State Street in downtown Eastlake. The route then follows State Street north out of town.

The loop through the Eastlake business district has precipitated the development of a truck route, which follows 25th Street past Main to Park Street, turns west one block and proceeds north on 6th Street to a junction with the existing route of U.S. 207 and Arrowhead Road. The truck route is not on the state highway system, but is used extensively by truckers and other travelers familiar with the area.

The proposed project would begin north of the river at milepost 75.6 and ends at milepost 81.6 on the existing route (5 miles). The project includes an urban section, a new rural section, and an existing, improved rural section. The urban section would consist of two 14-foot travel lanes, and a 14-foot center turn lane. The new rural section, from north of Park Street to Arrowhead Road, would consist of two 12-foot wide lanes and two 10-foot wide shoulders. The reconstructed rural segment would be built with two 12-foot lanes and two 6-foot shoulders. The basic right-of-way width for the urban section would be 80 feet and the proposed basic width for the rural section would be 140 feet.

A traffic signal will be installed at the intersection of the new section of U.S. 207 (25th Street) and Park Street. School crossing signs will be installed north of the intersection. ITD is also recommending the school district employ a crossing guard to help protect children during busy periods.

Street lighting will be included from the railroad crossing to Park Street. Sidewalks are planned for the curb and gutter area along both sides of the urban section. Formal landscaping is not part of the current plans for the project. Planting for wetlands mitigation and habitat enhancements will be included in the proposed work.

The new route would improve capacity, add appropriate traffic controls, and reduce the length of U.S. 207 by approximately .9 of a mile. The project would also provide a new roadway surface, add curb, gutter and sidewalk on the urban section, improve continuity, reduce travel time, and alleviate traffic congestion in downtown Eastlake.

The proposed new alignment from the intersection of Main Street and east of 25th Street to the intersection of the new alignment and existing U.S. 207, a distance of 1.2 miles, would be added to the state highway system as U.S. 207.

Project Purpose

This project is needed because the existing route has limited traffic carrying capacity, inadequate control, and out-of-direction travel through Eastlake. Approximately 2,200 vehicles use the section between the Eastlake River Bridge and the Arrowhead Road Junction daily. It is anticipated the traffic will increase to about 3,300 vehicles daily by the year 2015.

The urban section has a variable width, on-street parking, curb and sidewalk. It allows for numerous private approaches onto the highway as it proceeds through town. The existing highway has a pavement width of 24 feet, with no shoulders. It has limited vertical and horizontal sight distances, and substandard approach points.

The existing section of U.S. 207 does not meet current highway standards. The mix of through traffic with local traffic in the downtown area has created congestion and safety concerns.

The present truck route is not satisfactory because it follows local streets, which are not of sufficient size to accommodate truck traffic. These streets were not constructed on an adequate foundation to withstand heavy truck traffic. Surface repairs have been necessary in recent years. Additionally, the residential streets were not designed to carry the volume of traffic that is currently using them. This results in unsafe conditions for area residents.

2. Goals and Objectives of Public Involvement on the Project

Goals:

- Gather the concerns and needs of the public to be considered during the project's decision making process.
- Use information gathered from the public to make informed decisions.

Objectives:

1. Ensure the public understands the project.
2. Establish and make known lines of communication.
3. Develop a process to involve the King County residents in clarifying their concerns and needs, and generating solutions to their concerns.
4. Present possible alternatives and develop a public involvement process to gather input and consensus (if possible) for a preferred alternative.
5. Communicate the decision making process with stakeholders.
6. Provide ongoing and accurate communications with stakeholders.

3. Project Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Communication Channels
Local citizens	Local newspaper, direct mail, public information meetings and workshops
Affected property owners	Direct mail, one-on-one meetings, public information meetings and workshops
Traveling public	Newspaper, signage, public information meetings and workshops
Eastlake city council	Direct mail, one-on-one meetings, city council presentations, public information meetings and workshops
King County commission	Direct mail, one-on-one meetings, county commission presentations, public information meetings and workshops
Mayor	Direct mail, one-on-one meetings, public information meetings and workshops

Stakeholders	Communication Channels
Eastlake (Main Street) neighborhood council	Direct mail, one-on-one meetings, presentation at neighborhood council meetings, public information meetings and workshops
Eastlake public works administration and other city staff (fire and police)	Direct mail, one-on-one meetings, public information meetings and workshops
Local utilities	Direct mail, one-on-one meetings, public information meetings and workshops
Trucking industry	Direct mail to heavy users, phone calls, and update to ITD Ports of Entry, article included in DMV trucking newsletter, public information meetings and workshops
Eastlake Chamber of Commerce and business community	Direct mail, one-on-one meetings, presentation at local chamber meetings, public information meetings and workshops
King County school district	Direct mail, fact sheet/flyer sent home from school with students, one-on-one meetings, presentation at local school meetings, public information meetings and workshops
Resource agencies	Direct mail, merger meetings, one-on-one meetings, public information meetings and workshops
Eastlake and King County media	Press releases, phone calls, interviews

4. Project Strategy

The public involvement process will be integrated into the development process and support the project milestones. Providing accurate and timely information to the public is critical in order to keep the project on time and on budget. This is a complicated project and misinformation has become an issue.

Approach to public involvement:

1. ITD will organize (with input from local officials and community leaders) a project advisory committee. The purpose of the committee is to provide project advice and ensure community participation. Committee meetings will be held at key points in the project. A committee member will be invited to attend ITD project meetings.
2. A series of public meetings and one-on-one meetings/presentations to ensure the public understands the project. Printed materials will be abundant throughout this project. ITD will also inform the community about the process, department point of contact, and the decision making process. This project is complicated and inaccurate information is circulating throughout the community.
3. Using the project stakeholder database and an extensive notification process, ITD will conduct an interactive workshop. The workshop will give the public an opportunity to clarify their concerns and needs, and propose solutions to their concerns.

ITD will present possible alternatives at the workshop. An interactive and facilitated discussion is planned. This process will be used to generate consensus for a preferred alternative. The participants will also have the opportunity to review the project's environmental issues. The workshop outcomes will be summarized and mailed to all stakeholders.

4. Informal outreach will occur throughout the process. If the State Street Neighborhood Association has a need for more than one presentation, ITD will accommodate their request. This same approach will be taken with Eastlake Chamber of Commerce, elected officials, school districts and other organizations and individuals.

Informal outreach will serve two purposes: First to keep accurate information circulating and second to assure the community that ITD is committed to addressing their concerns.

5. ITD will establish a system to record, address and respond to concerns as quickly as possible.

5. Tools and Techniques

- Stakeholder mailing list (an initial project mailing list has been developed at the district. This mailing list will be updated throughout the project.)
- Printed materials
 - Letter of introduction and updates
 - Project brochure or fact sheet
 - Newsletters
 - School flyer
 - Project logo
 - Letter informing stakeholders of decisions
 - Display ads in newspaper
 - Press releases
 - Presentations
 - Display boards for one-on-one presentations and public meeting
- One-on-one meetings and community meetings (Small group meetings or one-on-one meetings will be held as needed to discuss individual issues or specific community concerns.)
 - Eastlake Mayor and City Council and King County Commission
 - Main Street Neighborhood Association
 - Eastlake Chamber of Commerce
 - Eastlake School District
 - Merger process meetings
- Convene a local project advisory committee
 - On a regular basis throughout the project
 - All local project advisory committee meetings are open to the public and public comments will be welcomed
- Public information meetings
 - Two initial public meetings will be held to present the project, outline the public involvement process, and receive input from stakeholders.
 - Additional meetings will be held if needed. The public involvement team will meet to evaluate the process and determine if additional meetings are necessary.

- Project hot line
 - A telephone hot line will be established to provide the public with an immediate way to identify issues and receive information. Project staff will document, review and respond to all calls.
- Media strategy
 - The public involvement team will meet and discuss a strategy for informing the media about the project.
- Project video
 - ITD Public Affairs Office will develop a project video. The video is necessary to eliminate any chance for misinformation about the project. The video will be used during the many planned presentations.
- Project Web page
- Public workshop
 - The public workshop will give the residents of King County an opportunity to clarify their concerns and needs and propose solutions. ITD will present three possible alternatives at the workshops. The participants will also have the opportunity to review the project's environmental issues.
- Public hearing
 - Upon completion of the Environmental Assessment.

6. Resources

The project budget includes funding for public involvement. Based on the public involvement plan additional resources will be necessary.

- The design consultant is retaining a public involvement sub-consultant. All the public involvement materials and activities (with the exception of the project video) will be designed, produced and conducted by the sub-consultant. (These materials must be approved by ITD.)
- Assistance from the ITD public involvement coordinator is needed in conducting the public involvement activities.
- The project budget includes resources for two public meetings and one public hearing. Based on our public involvement scoping process, a public workshop has been added to the consultant's scope of work. Project manager will identify additional funds for the workshop.

7. Project Schedule

Activity	Day	Integrate into CPM
Refine project stakeholder database	525	
Initiate development of project letter of introduction, logo, fact sheet, school flyer, video, media strategy and presentation materials for one-on-ones, meetings and workshops	525-465	
Plan and schedule two public meetings (one meeting will be held mid-day and the other in the evening)	525-465	
Prepare and place display ad, road signage and press release for first public meetings	450	Yes
Meet with the mayor and city council of Eastlake	429	
Meet with King County Commission	428	
Meet with State Street Neighborhood Association	427	
Meet with Eastlake Chamber of Commerce	426	
Organize local project advisory committee	420	
Send letter of introduction and notification for public meetings	415	
Meet with local project advisory committee	400	
Meet with Eastlake Public Works director	365	
Place phone calls to trucking industry	365	
Public meetings	359	Yes
Meet with local project advisory committee	360	
Develop and send newsletter with notification of public workshop	330	Yes
Place workshop display ads in local paper	325	
Place public meeting notification along proposed route	320	
Conduct public workshops	280	Yes
Summarize and send workshop results out with second newsletter mailing	261	
Meet with local project advisory committee	260	

Activity	Day	Integrate into CPM
Meet with King County Commission and Eastlake City Council and mayor	249	
Meet with State Street Neighborhood Association	248	
Meet with Eastlake Chamber of Commerce	247	
Prepare and send third newsletter	205	
Prepare and place display ad, and press release for public hearing and notice of availability of the EA	115	Yes
Make environmental document available for public review and comment	110	
Send notice of public hearing and EA availability	97	
Place public hearing notification along proposed route	57	
Hold public hearing	47	Yes
Summarize and send public hearing information to stakeholders	25	
Meet with local project advisory committee	5	
Phone or send personal letter to King County Commission, Eastlake mayor and city council, chairman of the State Street Neighborhood Association, president of Eastlake Chamber of Commerce informing of final decision	4	
Phone or send personal letter to stakeholders informing of final decision	4	
Send press release announcing final decisions and presenting tentative construction schedule.	1	

8. Management

- The public involvement team (project manager, public involvement coordinator, planners, design consultant and public involvement consultant) will meet to review and approve public involvement plan.
- The team will meet on an as needed basis in the district conference room to review and track public involvement activities.
- All activities will be coordinated with project manager.
- The consultant is responsible for all tasks identified in their scope of work.
- The team will participate in all public information meetings and workshops.
- Any informal feedback received throughout the project will be forwarded immediately to the project manager. This information will be discussed during team meetings.
- The public involvement consultant will coordinate all printed materials with the public involvement coordinator and seek approval from the project manager.
- The public involvement team will review documentation and Location/Design study report before it is submitted.

9. Evaluation

- The public involvement team will meet periodically at the discretion of the project manager to evaluate public involvement activities.
- The team will meet after each public meeting and hearing or soon afterwards to evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting.
- An evaluation meeting will be held upon completion of the project.

Chapter 3 Summary

In this chapter, you learned to distinguish between simple and complex highway projects.

- The complexity of a transportation project is based on a number of criteria, such as the amount of construction, anticipated controversy, regulatory and other agency involvement, environmental impacts, and status in the stewardship plan.
- During the environmental review process, ITD works with the Federal Highway Administration to determine the level necessary for documenting environmental impacts. These levels include categorical exclusions (CEs), environmental assessments (EAs), and environmental impact statements (EISs).
- Simple projects are those for which little controversy and environmental effects are expected. There are three levels of simple projects that help determine the degree of public involvement necessary.
- Complex projects are those likely to significantly affect environmental resources and lead to controversy. There are also three levels of complex projects that help determine the degree of public involvement necessary.

Chapter 4: Concluding, Documenting and Evaluating Public Involvement

This chapter provides the following information:

- Overview for completing the public involvement component of project development
- Communicating the decisions of project development to the public
- Documenting the process and results of public involvement
- Evaluating public involvement strategies and approaches
- Chapter summary

An Overview

Communication is vital during any transportation project. As you learned earlier in this guidebook, communication is a two-way process. That two-way process continues to the end of project development when the final decision is shared with stakeholders and the public. All aspects of public involvement should be continually evaluated and documented. These ongoing processes will ensure that the public involvement plan can be easily modified, if necessary, and decision makers can review the documentation to make the best decisions for the project.

Communicating Decisions to the Public

Though communication between ITD and the public occurs throughout the development of a transportation project, it plays a different role at the end of the development process. At this time, the public is told the formal decision made by the department, the Idaho Transportation Board or the Federal Highway Administration.

You will help determine the best means for sharing information about the location, design and construction schedule. If construction information is not available, the department must let people know when it will be available.

Two methods are recommended for informing stakeholders and the public that a decision has been made:

- Personal letters from the district engineer or the project manager are sent to the stakeholders. Such correspondence should include details, construction schedule and possibly maps.
- A news release is issued. This news release should also include details and the construction schedule.

Documenting the Process and Results of Public Involvement

Writing about the process and results of public involvement encourages better planning, communication, recording and evaluating of that public involvement.

Public involvement involves a wealth of documentation. You might create informational brochures or Web sites to share information. You might also develop comment sheets on which to gather input from the public. Having current addresses in a database application will help streamline mailings about a project. All of these tools are considered documentation and, if done carefully, will contribute to the effectiveness of the public involvement in project development.

Recording the process, and the results of the process, is also important since that record is often consulted during decision making. Rejected ideas have a way of resurfacing if they are not accurately recorded and addressed. In addition, decision makers must know how the public was involved, whether the appropriate stakeholders participated, what the public said, and many other factors that weigh in their decisions. ITD also has legal requirements that must be fulfilled through careful and accurate documentation.

And, of course, the department doesn't want to have to reinvent the wheel. ITD wants to learn from successes and failures. Accurate documentation allows project managers and project concept team members to go back and evaluate what was done, what could have been done better and what wasn't done. Successful strategies can be adapted for similar projects. Ineffective strategies can be examined more carefully: Why did that strategy fail? Could it be modified for better effectiveness? This evaluation needs to be ongoing. Project team members can evaluate previous steps at any time and make corrections, if necessary. But they will most likely look to the documentation to help them make those assessments

The following table shows ITD recommendations for documentation and who is responsible for it. For example, the *Location and/or Design Study Report* includes a summary of both formal and informal public

involvement activities. Formal (public hearings) and informal (all other activities) should both be documented. This task is the responsibility of the project manager. Once project development is completed, the department recommends that several documents be located within the “[residents file](#).”¹³ (See Table 3 below)

Table 3 Documentation of public involvement

Documents	Responsibility		
	District	Office of Public Affairs	Resident's File
Relevant STIP public involvement comments	X	X	
Public involvement scoping questions and answers	X		Include
Public involvement scope of work	X	X	
Public involvement plan	X	X	Include
Public involvement materials (Brochures, newsletters, press releases, print ads, etc.)	X	X	
Stakeholder database/mailling list (primary responsibility is with the district)	X	X	Include
Informal comments	X		
Letters or other comments given to ITD	X	X	
Public informational meeting/workshop (sign in sheets, notification materials, informational materials, photos, oral and written testimony)		X	
Public hearing documents (sign in sheets, notification materials, informational materials, photos, oral and written testimony)		X	
ITD responses to public comments	X	X	
Record of Decision	X	X	Include
Project's media coverage	X	X	Include
Final communication with project stakeholders regarding decision and expected construction timeline	X	X	Include
Public involvement summary for the Location Design Study Report	X		
Public involvement summary for the resident's file		X	Include

¹³ The resident's file is a file prepared by the project development manager and sent to the construction project manager.

Evaluating Public Involvement Strategies and Activities

Through evaluation, ITD can determine the degree to which planned activities provided input and helped the department make effective decisions. Much of the evaluation is ongoing. For example, after a meeting, a debriefing or recapping session would be helpful in determining whether ITD met its objectives. During such a post-meeting review, you should honestly consider these questions:

- What did you think about the meeting?
- How did the community perceive the meeting? (Since community perception will affect the development of the project, it is better to understand their perceptions early). What type of feedback did the meeting generate from the public?
- Did the meeting accomplish the intended purpose?
- Did the public understand the purpose of the meeting and respond accordingly?
- Did the audience represent individuals and groups you expected to have an interest?

It is also important to evaluate efforts at the end of the development process. Project managers, project concept team members, and the public involvement coordinator should meet as a group to discuss the project. The group should respond to the following questions:

Goals and objectives

- Were the goals of public involvement met?
- Were the public involvement objectives met?
- How closely did the process follow the public involvement plan?
- What modifications had to be made, and were those modifications effective?
- Were changes documented and the plan updated, if needed?

Timeline

- What influence did public involvement have on the project development schedule?
- Were public involvement activities conducted at the appropriate times?

Contacts

- According to public involvement records, how many letters were sent and phone calls made?
- What was the attendance at public meetings and hearings, if held?
- How many comments were provided and which stakeholder groups do they represent?
- Did the department reach all identified stakeholders? If so, was the contact effective?

Media

- What did the media report about the project? About the department?
- What issues did they cover? Which did they criticize? Which did they applaud?
- What kind of editorials and letters were published about the project? Did ITD respond? If so, how did it respond?

The Department

- How did other department staff (district engineer, planners, headquarters, and others) view the public involvement process for the project?
- How did the Idaho Transportation Board react? What feedback, if any, did they provide?
- How effective was the communication between affected divisions involved with the project's public involvement activities?

Budget

- Did the public involvement process stay within budget? Explain.

Materials

- How effective were the public involvement materials created for the project—such as brochures, news releases, newsletters, print ads, video, and others? How much did they cost?
- Was there any public reaction to the materials?
- How effective was the coordination among those who developed and distributed the materials?

Midstream Adjustments and Crises

- What crises, changes, or unexpected events occurred during the project?
- How well were they handled?
- How could they have been avoided?

Consultants

- How well did the public involvement consultant understand and incorporate ITD's public involvement goals and objectives into the project?
- How effective was the consultant in helping the department engage the public?
- Did the consultants follow ITD standards? (Documents, press releases, Web sites etc.)
- How was the quality of the consultant's work?
- What will I look for when selecting the next public involvement consultant?

Self

- What did I think about the process?
- What did I think went well? What didn't work?
- What would I do differently?

Chapter 4 Summary

In this chapter, we discussed the process for finishing the public involvement component of project development. Remember:

- Communication is two-way and occurs throughout the development process. However, as part of concluding project development, the final decision will need to be communicated to the public.
- Documentation is vital for planning, communicating, recording and evaluating public involvement processes and results.
- Honest evaluation, both ongoing and final, will lead to more effective public involvement.

Chapter 5: Public Involvement: Roles and Responsibilities

This chapter provides the following information:

- [An overview of public involvement responsibilities for complex projects with consultants](#)
- [An overview of public involvement responsibilities for complex projects without consultants](#)
- [Chapter summary](#)

Roles and Responsibilities

Many people are involved in scoping, planning and implementing public involvement—district engineers, public involvement coordinator, district planners, and consultants. The tables below identify the public involvement process and primary responsibilities for complex projects with and without consultants.

Table 4 Public involvement responsibilities, complex projects with consultants

Public Involvement Process	District	Office of Public Affairs	Public Involvement Consultant
Scoping	Completes scoping questions	Participates at district's request	Use the district's responses to scoping questions when developing the project's scope of work
	Requests consultant's minimum qualifications and selects project consultant	Participates in the selection of the project consultant at the district's request	
	Reviews and approves consultant's scope of work	At the district's request, reviews consultant's scope of work and gives feedback to the district	Prepares scope of work

Public Involvement Process	District	Office of Public Affairs	Public Involvement Consultant
Planning	Reviews and approves consultant's public involvement plan	At the district's request, reviews consultant's public involvement plan and gives feedback to district	Prepares public involvement plan
	Submits public involvement plan to Headquarters Office of Public Affairs, public involvement coordinator		
Implementing	Manages public involvement process and activities	Reviews and approves public involvement materials Attends and ensures proper documentation of public hearings At the district request participates in public involvement activities	Implements scope of work
Documenting	Maintains accurate public involvement files and includes public involvement information in resident file	Archives original public involvement sign-in sheets, comments, letters, ads, articles, and videotapes	Completes tasks as directed by the districts and as negotiated in the project scope of work
		Archives accurate public hearing files	Prepares summary of public involvement activities as directed by district
		Prepares public involvement summary to include in resident file	

Public Involvement Process	District	Office of Public Affairs	Public Involvement Consultant
Concluding	Communicates decisions and expected construction date to project stakeholders Passes public involvement information to resident engineer	Assists project manager in communicating final decisions on proposed projects	Completes tasks as directed by the districts and as negotiated in project scope of work
Evaluating	Conducts a public involvement process evaluation	Participates in evaluation	Participates at the district's request in evaluation

Table 5 Public involvement responsibilities, complex projects without consultants

Public Involvement Process	District	Office of Public Affairs
Scoping	Completes scoping questions	Participates at district request
Planning	Prepares a public involvement plan	At the district's request, reviews district public involvement plan and gives feedback
	Submits public Involvement plan to Headquarters Office of Public Affairs, public involvement coordinator	
Implementing	Manages public involvement process and activities	At the request of the district, prepares printed materials (may include use of private graphic designers or editors) Attends and ensures proper documentation of public meetings/hearings. At the district's request, implements public involvement activities
Documenting	Maintains accurate public involvement files and includes public involvement information in resident file	Maintains accurate public hearing files and hearing documents
Concluding	Communicates with project stakeholders of decision and expected construction dates Passes public involvement information on to construction manager	Assists project manager with communicating final decisions on projects
Evaluating	Conducts a public involvement process evaluation	Participates in evaluation

Chapter 5 Summary

In this chapter, we discussed that many people are involved in scoping, planning, and implementing public involvement. Remember:

- Project managers are responsible for the development of public involvement plans for complex projects.
- Project managers should include the public involvement coordinator in the design consultant selection process.
- The public involvement coordinator is responsible for reviewing and providing feedback to the project manager regarding the consultant's scope of work and public involvement plan.
- Project managers can request the public involvement coordinator's participation in simple and complex projects when a consultant is not involved in a project.

Appendices

A. NEPA and the Transportation Decision Making Process

Environmental Documents¹⁴

History

The 1960s brought about an increase in awareness and concern for the environment. In response to this, Congress passed and signed into law the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The Act has three major goals and that have influenced the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and all Federal agencies:

- it sets national environmental policy
- it establishes a basis for environmental impact statements (EISs)
- it created the CEQ—Council of Environmental Quality.

NEPA requires that to the extent possible, policies, regulations and laws of the federal government be interpreted and administered in accordance with NEPA. It also requires federal agencies to use an interdisciplinary approach in planning and decision making for actions that impact the environment. (In FHWA, the interdisciplinary expertise is provided in the Washington Headquarters.) Finally, NEPA requires the preparation of an EIS on all major Federal actions significantly affecting the human environment.

NEPA calls for an examination and consideration of impacts of the proposed action on sensitive resources when a transportation facility is being considered. These resources include, but are not limited to floodplains, wetlands, and endangered species, historic and archeological sites, parklands, air quality, wildlife habitat, etc. There are also the transportation needs that need to be fulfilled. Because of impacts to resources and needed transportation improvements uses a balanced decision-making process that considers a range of factors of both impacts to the resources and transportation needs. The decision of how to balance these factors rests with FHWA.

It is FHWA's policy that all environmental protection and enhancement requirements, including those set out in Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Act which protects historic sites and publicly owned public parks, recreation areas wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and 23 U.S.C. 109(h), which mandates consideration of social and economic impacts to the human environment, be completed as part of the NEPA process. Evidence of this compliance must be contained in the appropriate

¹⁴ National Highway Institute, NEPA and the Transportation Decision Making Process, Participant Notebook, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, February 1999, Publication No. FHWA-HI-93-038. Project Development and Documentation Overview, II Environmental Documents page 1-3.

documentation. Further, it is FHWA policy that public involvement be essential part of this process.

As noted above, NEPA called for the creation of the council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The CEQ is an office with the Executive Office of the President and has four main functions:

- (1) to develop environmental policies for the nation;
- (2) to monitor environmental quality;
- (3) to prepare an annual environmental quality report; and
- (4) to monitor federal actions.

In 1970, CEQ issued guidelines for the preparation of environmental documents. The FHWA prepared a policy directive in response to those guidelines, as did some other federal agencies. For FHWA this regulations is “Environmental Impact and Related Procedures,” [23 CFR 771](#), effective November 28, 1987. The CEQ monitored federal environmental processing of all the agencies, and found the EISs were too long with less important issues being discussed at great length, that there was poor or no early coordination and the process led to unnecessary delays caused by confusion over differing terminology and procedures among federal agencies. To remedy these problems, President Carter issued Executive Order (EO) 11991 in May 1977. The key provision of the EO was that CEQ could issue mandatory regulations, not just guidelines, for implementing the provisions of NEPA consistently throughout the Federal Government. The result was the CEQ Regulations for Implementing the Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act,” [40 CFR Parts 1500-1508](#).

The principle goals of the CEQ regulations are to reduce the paperwork and delays, and to produce better environmental decisions. The regulations focus on four key areas:

- (1) Early coordination
- (2) Completing the environmental process
- (3) Uniform processing options for all agencies, and
- (4) Faster and better processing.

To improve early coordination, the CEQ regulations introduced the concept of “lead agency” and “cooperating agency.” The lead agency is that Federal agency which is responsible for the Federal action. The cooperating agencies are those with special expertise (e.g., the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of the Interior) or jurisdiction by law (e.g., the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) or the Coast Guard (USCG) when a permit is necessary). The CEQ also instituted a scoping process which was intended to get the lead and cooperating agencies and other interested groups together early in the project development process to determine the scope of the issues to be addressed, and identify any important issues related to the proposed action. By properly using the early coordination process, agencies could avoid conflicts later, and could assure full input from the various interests. Early coordination continues to be emphasized in all transportation guidance and legislation.

In order to aid in completing the process, CEQ introduced two specific formal decision documents:

- (1) The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and
- (2) The Record of Decision (ROD).

Use of these documents reflects CEQ's belief that the environmental document should be a full-disclosure information document but that there still was a need for a formal decision document.

The CEQ regulations also established uniform processing options for all Federal agencies. These options are the

- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS),
- Categorical exclusion (CE), and
- Environmental Assessment (EA).

One key early decision for FHWA is the type of document needed to satisfy the NEPA process and thus advance a project. Remember, NEPA requires an EIS for major Federal actions significantly affecting the human environment and 23 USC 109(h) requires consideration of adverse economic and social (as well as environmental) impacts for Federal-aid highway projects. The key here is “significance” and guidelines for determining significance. It is important to understand that projects with clearly identified, significant social, economic, or environmental impacts always require an EIS.

A second type of project also emerges—those without significant impacts. These CE projects, under certain circumstances, can be “categorically excluded” from having an EIS prepared. A third grouping is those projects with uncertainty as to whether there is a significant impact. In those cases, EAs are prepared to determine if there will or will not be significant impacts associated with a project. If there are no significant impacts, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is prepared. If the EA indicates there are significant impacts, and EIS must be prepared.

As part of the environmental process, public involvement comes under the overall Council On Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, which apply alike to all Federal highway projects both in the National Highway System and the Surface Transportation Program. The CEQ regulatory requirements for diligent efforts to involve the public ([40 CFR 1506.6](#)) and for scoping ([40 CFR 1501.7](#)) are particularly noteworthy. Public involvement activities must be integrated into the State's environmental process.

B. Public Affairs Office

The mission of the Office of Public Affairs is:

- to provide an external communication strategy that will inform the public of the department's mission, goals, accomplishments and challenges;
- to make positive, image-building statements about the department's employees and contributions to the state;
- to provide a public hearing and public information meeting strategy that will achieve broader and more purposeful community involvement in the department's decision-making processes;
- to provide an internal communication strategy that will contribute to building and maintaining the commitment of Idaho Transportation Department employees to the long-term goals of the organization; and
- to provide support to the requests of the Executive Management team, divisions, bureaus and sections.

The vision of the Office of Public Affairs is:

- citizens and leadership who understand the importance of transportation to the state's future and the challenges the department faces in providing that service;
- a professional, consistent, on-going relationship with all the state's media; and
- citizens who have meaningful access to the department's decision making system and appropriate influence on the transportation needs of their communities and state.

Communication services provided by the Office of Public Affairs:

- Media training
- Statewide news releases—print and video
- Weekly news clippings—video and print
- Idaho road report services (phone, print and Web)
- Telephone, mail and e-mail responses to public and media inquiries
- Public information campaigns
- Public service announcements

- Brochures, newsletters, advertisements, postcards to support projects, publications and campaigns
- Web site development and design
- Dedications/ribbon cuttings
- Special Report to the Idaho Legislature
- Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee presentation team
- The Transporter—internal employee newsletter
- Video training
- Official Idaho highway map
- Marketing/publicity
- Photography

The Office of Public Affairs

The Office of Public Affairs is comprised of five full-time employees:

Public Affairs Manager	Jeff Stratten	334-8817
Public Involvement Coordinator	Stephanie Zabala	334-4444
Public Information Specialist	Joe Relk	334-8002
Television Specialist	Dave Tuttle	334-8037
Office Secretary	Billy Lyndaker	334-8005

The Office of Public Affairs has three part-time employees:

Public Information Specialist	Chereen Langrill	334-8874
Videographer	Mark Hall	334-8242
Clerical Specialist	Ann Gould	334-8004

District 3 has two part-time public information specialists that work in cooperation with the Office of Public Affairs:

Public Information Specialist	Mollie McCarty	334-8003
Public Information Specialist	Jennifer Oxley	334-8881

District 1 has a full-time public information specialist that works in cooperation with the Office of Public Affairs:

Public Information Specialist	Barbara Babic	772-1288
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**A member of the Office of Public Affairs staff can be contacted:
24 hours a day, seven days a week, 334-8005**

C. Working With Consultants

Typically, prime design consultants retain public involvement consultants for ITD projects. Public involvement consultants assist the prime design consultant, district project manager and the department's public affairs office to engage the public in the development of highway projects.

The role of the public involvement consultant is negotiated during the district contracting process. Public involvement consultants are accountable to the prime design consultant and ultimately to the district project managers. Public involvement consultants develop a project *scope of work*. Based on the negotiated scope of work, public involvement consultants can be responsible for developing the project's public involvement plan. Both the project manager and the public involvement coordinator should approve the plan.

The following table lists the department's guidelines, recommendations, and helpful hints that consultants should know before pursuing work with the department.

Table 6 Consultant guidelines

Consultant cannot	Consultant must
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak on behalf of the department • Conduct media interviews • Conduct one-on-one meetings without a department representative or approval • Place company logos on project printed materials without approval from the department • Contact community leaders without approval from the department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Office of Public Affairs if media requests information • Keep accurate records of interactions with the public and provide documentation to project manager and public involvement coordinator • Receive approval from the Office of Public Affairs on all project materials (news releases, publications, ads, display boards) in conjunction with district approval • Place the department's logo on all project materials • Provide all services negotiated in the scope of work • Use software that is compatible with ITD's software

Table 7 Consultant recommendations

Recommendations	Helpful Hints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use scoping questions to guide the development of the project scope of work • Contact the Office of Public Affairs before completing the scope of work and schedule time to discuss it with the public involvement coordinator • Build extra time into the deadline schedule to allow for the department's review and approval process. • Office of Public Affairs needs five days to review and approve most materials • Keep in contact with the Office of Public Affairs and the public involvement coordinator throughout the project • Provide the department with a phone number and e-mail address where you are reachable • Edit carefully all materials before requesting approval from the Office of Public Affairs, including spell check 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that materials you produce are for highway projects. • Use a professional graphic artist for design work • Visit possible meeting locations before you select the final location. Reserve the location and make sure it is available for set up one hour before the event • Attend meetings that you plan, arrive an hour early, set up for the meeting, and clean up afterward • Be flexible because developing highway projects requires dynamic processes • Use project-related photos in printed materials • Use e-mail as a communication tool with the Office of Public Affairs • Ensure the printer of project publications has enough time to complete printing and mail material in a timely manner

D. Bibliography of Resources

Communication: A Key to Success, Kansas Department of Transportation, KDOT Public Involvement Plan, prepared for The Kansas Department of Transportation by Woodward-Clyde International-Americans, Overland Park, Kansas, October 1997

Design Manual, July 2000 Roadway Design, Idaho Transportation Department, July 2000

Idaho Corridor Planning Guidebook, Idaho Transportation Department, Division of Planning, February 19, 1998

National Highway Institute, NEPA and the Transportation Decision Making Process, Participant Notebook, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Publication No. FHWA-HI-93-038, February 1999

Project Development Procedures Manual, California State Department of Transportation, July 7, 1999

Public Involvement Handbook, Techniques, Strategies, Responsibilities and Organization for Public Involvement, Montana Department of Transportation, March 16, 1998

Public Involvement in Transportation Decisionmaking, Course Manual, Federal Program Training, National Transit Institute, The State University of New Jersey Rutgers, U.S. Department of Transportation, March 4, 1998

Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-making, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, September 1996

Public Participation in Public Decisions, New Skills and Strategies for Public Managers, John Clayton Thomas, Jossey-Bass Inc. Publishers, 1995

Project Participation, Virginia Department of Transportation, Policy Manual for Public Participation in Transportation Projects, March 15, 1999

Public Outreach Handbook for Departments of Transportation, NCHRP
Report 364, National Cooperative Highway Research Program,
Transportation Research Board, National Research Council, National
Academy Press, Washington, D.C., 1994

E. Guidebook Development Process

The demand and need for public involvement during design and construction of highway projects in Idaho is at an all time high. ITD employees and consultants are carrying out public involvement activities without knowledge of ITD's public involvement goals and objectives. Further, ITD recognized a need to define and promote the use of department-wide public involvement guidelines. To accomplish this objective, the department decided to create the *ITD Guidebook to Public Involvement, Development of Highway Projects*.

In the spring of 2000, ITD created an employee Public Involvement Guidebook Advisory Committee and retained the services of a public involvement consultant to assist in creating the guidebook. The committee was charged with

- Overseeing the guidebook planning process
- Validating research
- Brainstorming solutions and appropriate public involvement levels and activities
- Approving and advocating for the use of the guidebook

The ITD Public Involvement Advisory Committee included

Barbara Babic Public Information Specialist, District 1	John Collins, P.E. Area and Location Engineer, Roadway Design Section
Judy Harmon, AICP Transportation Planner, District 5	Ken Helm Transportation Staff Engineer Assistant, District 2
Lance Holmstrom Senior Transportation Planner, District 6	Robert Humphrey Senior Transportation Planner, District 4
Carl Main, P.E. Project Manager District 3	Mollie McCarty Public Information Specialist, District 3, Headquarters

Mark McNeese Planning, Idaho Transportation Department	Patricia Raino Planning, Idaho Transportation Department
Carole Richardson Senior Transportation Planner, District 1	Jeff Stratten Public Information Officer, Headquarters
Mike Vogel Public Involvement Director, Washington Infrastructure Services	Janet Weaver Public Transportation Sr. Planner, Division of Transportation
Stephanie Zabala Public Involvement Coordinator, ITD Headquarters	

ITD also hired a public involvement consultant, Rosemary B. Curtin of Rosemary Brennan Curtin, Inc., to do the following:

- Develop the guidebook planning process
- Conduct primary and secondary research
- Assist and facilitate committee meetings
- Facilitate planning process
- Draft the guidebook

Development of the guidebook followed a traditional planning process. Beginning with secondary research, Curtin and the committee reviewed current public involvement literature. Many of the materials reviewed are included in the bibliography appendix of this document. The purpose of secondary research was to develop an understanding of current public involvement standards and techniques in order to steer the planning process in the right direction.

Curtin also conducted a survey of model and surrounding states to learn how public involvement is being provided and at what current standards in other departments of transportation. Curtin surveyed three model states and Idaho's six surrounding states: Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. ITD received a wealth of information from other state departments of transportation that has contributed to the development of the guidebook.

In addition, Curtin traveled to each ITD district and interviewed key leaders and employees who have public involvement responsibilities. The

outcome of these interviews shaped the content of this guidebook. Curtin conducted 35 formal interviews and consulted numerous ITD employees.

The advisory committee and Curtin worked closely with the Roadway Design to make sure the guidebook is closely integrated into ITD's highway development process.

The committee met several times throughout the process. The committee reviewed and approved the guidebook. The committee also made the following recommendations:

- ITD needs additional resources to manage and implement public involvement in the development of highway projects
- Public involvement training should accompany the release of the guidebook
- Ongoing public involvement training
- ITD needs to host an annual public involvement meeting or conference related to public involvement, similar to the engineering conferences held by ITD or in conjunction with the engineering conferences

F. ITD 2001 *Design Manual*- Public Information Meetings and Public Hearings

(This information has been taken from the *Design Manual* and included in this guidebook for your convenience.)

4.16.3 Public Information Meetings

Public information meetings are often held as part of urban construction projects, prior to public hearings, and when the time between the final hearing and the beginning of construction is longer than three (3) years.

The meetings can occur before and during construction of a highway project. The District design engineer shall contact the public involvement coordinator when bid specifications require a contractor to sponsor weekly public information meetings prior to and during a construction project. The weekly meetings generally occur for urban projects, or where there is considerable public interest in the project. The public involvement coordinator along with Public Affairs will work with the contractor to publicize and facilitate the meetings.

A period of not less than 45 days is allowed for the return of comments on the draft EIS [23 *CFR* 771.123(i)].

If there is intense public interest in a project, if the level of impact is great, or if the project's public hearing was held longer than three (3) years prior to construction, public information meeting or meetings must be held. The number of appropriate public hearings/meetings for a project with an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement needs to be determined based on issues, inputs, proposed mitigation, and public concern/input.

Conducting Public Information Meetings

The public information meeting shall be conducted in a format similar to a public hearing (see [Figure 4-11](#), Public Hearing Requirements). Details about the format are available from the Public Affairs Office.

The activities of the public information meeting shall be documented with file memos that include:

- How long meetings or contacts lasted.
- Where the meetings were held.
- Who initiated the meetings?

- Who participated?
- How participants were notified.
- Content of discussions, questions, comments, and concerns.

4.1.2 Public Hearings

Public hearings provide the department with an opportunity to summarize studies, new developments, and public input on a proposed project. The hearings also give ITD opportunities to share project information with the public and, in turn, receive more input before final design.

Public Hearing Need

The District Engineer may waive public hearings when public awareness and support for the project is apparent and non-controversial. If there is a question as to whether a hearing is needed, the District Engineer shall request in writing that the Roadway Design Engineer determine whether a hearing will be held based on the following criteria and the results of the public information meetings.

Projects involving federal funds must have a hearing, or an opportunity for hearing, when there is:

- Acquisition of significant amounts of right-of-way.
- Substantial change to the layout or function of the connecting roadways or of the facilities being improved.
- Significant adverse impact on abutting property or when litigation or public controversy is anticipated.
- Significant social, economic, and/or environmental effect on the surrounding area.

Projects financed totally with state funds must have a public hearing when:

- The state highway serving or traversing any city is to be abandoned, relocated, or replaced.
- There is significant public interest or controversy surrounding the project.

FHWA may request a public hearing when a hearing may be in the public interest.

Figure 4-11

PUBLIC HEARING REQUIREMENTS

Glossary of Personnel Abbreviations/Terminology			
ASHD	Administrative Secretary Highway Division	PDE	Project Design Engineer
CE	Chief Engineer	PIC	Public Involvement Coordinator
DE	District Engineer	Q&A	Questions and Answers
District	District Engineer, Assistant District Engineer, and District personnel—Project Development Engineer, Project Engineer, Traffic Engineer, Right-of-way Supervisor, Traffic Engineer, and Environmental Planner	RD	HQ Roadway Design Section
ENV	HQ Environmental Section	RDE	Roadway Design Engineer
HO	Hearing Officer	R/W	Right-of-way Manager
HPM	Highway Programming Manager	SB	Secretary to the Idaho Transportation Board
PA	Public Affairs	Team	District personnel, PIC, ENV, and PA

DAY	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
	Submit environmental documentation to ENV for approval prior to beginning of hearing process.	District
70	Submit request to RD for hearing requirement determination. (If Question exists as to whether or not a hearing is needed)	District
70	Submit project hearing plans to RD for approval.	District
65	Make determination on hearing requirement and advise District and PIC.	RD
65	Notify PIC when plans are approved and return approved plans to District.	RD
65	Send copy of environmental document to PIC for file.	ENV
65	Call PIC to schedule hearing date: _____.	District
65	Inform SB and ASHD to advise appropriate Board member of hearing date.	PIC
60	Meet to outline organization of hearing. Define scope of hearing and make initial assignments for support materials, presentation, Q&A, and team leader.	Team

DAY	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
60	Make assignments for following areas: General administration, Local government concerns, Participation by other political entities, Illustrations and exhibits, Event site coordination, Video and still photographs, Property owner contacts and R/W issues, Publications (written project overview), Publicity, Event scripts for each presenter.	Team DE DE DE/PIC PDE/PIC PDE/PIC PA/PIC R/W PIC PIC/PA Each
60	If system action, advise HPM and PIC.	RD
60	Identify Work Authority: _____ Activity code: _____ Functional code: _____ Rule: _____	PIC
60	Identify hearing location: _____ (Must be handicapped accessible and approximately 2,800 sq. ft. Please note that the best hearing location is one with all facilities included—sign-in area, main hall, separate video and testimony areas, break room for staff.) Hearing hours: _____	District/PIC
60	Submit project information to PIC. Include Reason for project, Type, Alternatives, Length, Estimated cost, Construction year, Environmental impacts, Public concerns, R/W properties effected, Map of project location that is suitable for reproduction, Location where project information/plans can be obtained, and Contact person and phone number.	District
60	Decide who will be the primary contact person for each area: Design: _____ Right-of-way: _____ Environment: _____ Traffic: _____ Alternates: _____ _____	DE
60	Layout all creative concepts for advance publicity; e.g., paid advertising, radio spots, news releases, etc. Identify papers and media to be contacted	PIC
60	Secure Hearing Officer	PIC

DAY	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
55	Contact property owners again to personally advise them of upcoming hearing date, time and location, plus impact on individual property.	District & R/W
55	Draft script to be used for video, project brochure, advertisements, news releases, etc. Send copy to Team. Comments due to PIC by Day 52	PIC
50	Make any necessary corrections to script and send copy to Team. Script should include shot list for video and still photographs.	PIC
45	Develop copy for all print/paid ads. Schedule dates for: Ads: _____ News releases: _____ Public notice: _____ and Interviews: _____	PIC
45	Make telephone inquiries of local officials to determine public interest in project as well as public concerns. Assess property owner concerns. Determine if notification needs to be translated into another language and notify PIC.	District
45	Scriptwriter, videographer, and District staff meet on-site to shoot video footage and still photos.	PIC/PA/ District
45	Finalize copy of paid ad and public notice. Review with Team.	PIC
40	Prepare Q&A for each area. Distribute copies internally.	Team
35	Draft letter for DE to send to involved property owners, local entities, utility companies, user groups, etc., advising them of the hearing. Review with DE, make any necessary changes, and transmit final copy to District. Comment due date should be two weeks after hearing. Request contact with District personnel if special needs are necessary.	PIC
30	Mail letter (and hearing brochure, if ready) to involved property owners, local entities, utility companies, Indian Tribes, user groups, special interest groups, state legislators, etc., advising them of the hearing. Send copy of the letter and mailing list to PIC.	District
21	First display ad appears in newspaper(s). Verify publication and file copy in hearing file	PIC
20	Print project brochure.	PIC
15	Report on any issues that might effect hearing to PIC.	DE & R/W
15	Train team members at hearing site with 1/2 day of full dress rehearsal at hearing site including videos, still photos, illustrations, and Q&A scripts. Include audience interaction with mock questions and answers.	PIC
15	Participate in local daily newspaper interview.	DE/PIC/PA
14	Second display ad appears in newspaper(s). Verify publication and file copy in hearing file.	PIC
10	Distribute approved news release to District/appropriate media.	PIC
10	OPTIONAL: Conduct off-site public presentation of the key elements of the proposed project in a high-visibility area such as a mall (gives opportunity to test presentations and reactions).	Team

DAY	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
10	Print reminder postcards with hearing information. Mail to same mailing list as DE's invitation letter (see Day 30).	PIC/District
7	Legal public notice appears in newspaper(s). Verify publication, send copy to HO, and file copy in hearing file.	PIC
7	Print sign-in forms and take to hearing.	PIC
7	Contact HO, give overview of project, brochure, and District contact.	PIC
5	Interview appears in newspaper(s). Verify and send copy to PA and PIC.	District
5	Do any final clean-up work and review changes from dress rehearsal.	Team
2	Final display ad appears in newspaper(s). Verify publication and file copy in hearing file.	PIC
1	Make reminder calls to media about public hearing.	PIC
1	Meet for final briefing	Team/HO/PIC
0	Conduct hearing.	Team/HO
-1	Critique hearing. HO leaves one tape recording with DE or PDE.	Team/HO
-5	Mail thank you letters, as necessary, and include written testimony forms to those who didn't attend hearing. Send copy to PIC.	PIC/DE
-7	Obtain attendance figures and number of males/females/ disabled and minorities from PIC for hearing certification.	HO
-14	Deadline for written comments to HO.	PIC
-15	Prepare transcript, certification, and other necessary information and give to PIC for copying and distribution.	HO
-15	Transmit copies of the transcript, sign-in sheets, certification of public notice, and mail-in testimony to the DE, SB (8 copies), RDE, ENV, FHWA, and local agencies/consulting engineer (if applicable). If local hearing, transmit original and one copy of transcript, mail-in testimony, and sign-in sheets to local entity with cover memo. Keep copy of everything in file.	PIC
-18	Transmit hearing transcript to DE and indicate required action by District.	RD
	Submit location and/or Location and/or Design Study Report to RD.	District

DAY	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
-18	<p>If Board decision is required by Administrative Policy A-13-02, Public Involvement for Location and Design Determinations: Prepare Board agenda item with recommendation (also see system action instructions) and submit to RD. Complete and submit Board agenda item with record of decision. Send copy to District. If system action: Send Board decision to local entity by certified mail within 10 days of decision and file copy in hearing file. Once construction is complete, prepare official minutes for Board signature and file copy in hearing file.</p>	District RD SB HPM
	<p>If Board decision is not required: Submit appropriate project report to RD with request for location/design approval.</p>	District
	Approve location/design of project and notify PIC and District of project approval.	CE/RD
	Prepare record of decision for CE signature.	RD
	Advise involved property owners and those who attended hearing of Board/CE decision through a personal letter from the DE using the mailing list from hearing invitation and sign-in sheets. File copy in hearing file.	PIC/District
	Prepare news release outlining decision and file copy in hearing file	PIC/PA
	Close out hearing file.	PIC

Hearing Information

Information needed at a hearing shall include, but not be limited to:

- The need and purpose for the proposed project.
- Project description.
- Project location sketch map.
- Alternative courses of action.
- Alternate project locations.
- Major design features.
- Engineering, social, economic, and environmental impacts.
- Environmental documents.
- Right-of-way requirements.
- Relocation assistance programs.
- Relocation assistance payments, when appropriate.
- Proposed mitigation procedures.

- How the project is consistent with local planning goals and objectives. Graphics and displays, such as aerial photographs, retouched photographs, and video information used in the hearing, shall be retained in the District until the project has been completed.

The public involvement coordinator shall gather hearing information together into a written brochure. The brochure shall be mailed (whenever possible) to involved property owners and local government officials with an invitation letter from the District Engineer. In addition, the brochure shall be available to each person attending the hearing.

Hearing plans shall be prepared for display at the hearing. The plans should show the following:

- The property owner's name, but not the acreage required or remaining. If title reports are not available, the owner's name, as indicated by the assessor's tax roll, is sufficient.
- The profile and ground line, except for urban projects where the profile and ground lines more or less coincide.
- The right-of-way lines established from the latest design and other pertinent features.

Right-of-way lines and approaches shown on the Design Hearing Plans are subject to change as the project progresses to final design.
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The project description and the project location sketch map are used as the basis for the informational brochure. The project description is to be written by the District and shall cover the following information plus any other appropriate features of the project:

- Description of where the project begins and ends, including the length of the construction and references to landmarks known to people familiar with the area.
- Roadway characteristics, including traffic lane widths, shoulders, medians, bike lanes or paths, barriers, truck lanes, turn bays, traffic signals/signs, and any other details in which the public may be interested.
- Right-of-way minimum and maximum widths, as well as access control and the general effects.
- Description of basic construction, such as what type of fills or excavations will occur; channel changes, if any; environmental concerns, including re-vegetation or environmental restoration; and wetlands and flood plain involvement.

- Structure requirements, including interchanges, grade separations, bridges, major culverts, etc.
- Proposed construction phases, such as what type of work will occur, when and how will the public be effected, and information about possible detours.
- Project location sketch map.

Public Hearing Scheduling

Information provided by the Districts to the public involvement coordinator in order to schedule a hearing shall include:

- Project description.
- Project sketch map.
- Tentative hearing date and location.
- Preferred hearing hours.
- A mailing list of adjacent property owners involved with right-of-way acquisition and other interested individuals.
- Locations where project information can be obtained and the contact person.
- Conceptual displays and graphics to be developed for the hearing.

In all cases, the major design features, alternatives, and required environmental documents (see [Chapter 3](#)), shall be reviewed by the headquarters Design Engineer and Environmental Manager prior to scheduling a public hearing to determine that the project's features are generally acceptable for hearing purposes. The public hearing date will be approved by the public involvement coordinator, after consultation with the Hearing Officer.

Notice of Public Hearing

The public involvement coordinator will administer the public hearing notification process and coordinate hearing activities with the Districts. The Public Involvement Coordinator, in consultation with the Environmental Manager, shall determine the length of the notification period as required by the project's environmental classification.

According to federal requirements, whenever a public hearing is held and a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared, the EIS/EA shall be available at the public hearing and for a minimum of 15 days in advance of the public hearing. The availability of the draft EIS shall be mentioned and public

comments requested in any public hearing notice and at the public hearing. If the public hearing on an action proposed for federal funding is canceled, a notice similar to a public hearing notice shall be placed in the newspaper advising where the draft EIS is available for review, how copies may be obtained, and when and where comments should be sent.

Newspaper advertisements, known as “display ads,” shall be published to notify the public of an opportunity for a public hearing. The display ads shall be published twice with at least seven (7) days between publication dates. The deadline for submitting a written request for a public hearing may not be less than fifteen (15) days after the date of publication of the first notice of opportunity for public hearing. The District shall then establish the hearing dates in coordination with the Public involvement coordinator, and notice will be sent to those requesting a hearing and the public through the newspaper. If no hearing is requested, a notice of hearing cancellation will be published.

When there is doubt about the need for a hearing and there is reason to believe that the project may be controversial, a notice of opportunity for a hearing may be used to satisfy the hearing requirement. Review of any project-related information before requesting a hearing cannot be required as a part of this notice. The only requirement is that the hearing request must be made in writing.

On occasion, the department will receive only a small number of written requests for a hearing. In this situation, it is permissible to advertise and hold a meeting at some convenient location to explain the project and answer any questions.

Each legal notice of a public hearing shall be published at least once. Specify the date, time, and place of the hearing; specify that pertinent information concerning the project is available for public inspection and copying, and explain where the information is available and include the name and phone number of a contact person. Procedures for submitting written comments following the hearing, notice of the availability of an environmental document (when applicable), and invitation for public comment on the environmental document shall also be included in the legal notice.

If the project may impact non-English speaking individuals, translated legal advertisements and notices should be prepared. Advertisements and notices shall be published in the newspaper serving the counties or cities where the proposed project is located. In addition, the advertisements and notices shall be published in other newspapers having a substantial circulation in the area. If no newspapers of general circulation are in the

project area, then notice will be posted in three (3) of the most public places near the proposed project.

In addition to publishing display ads for the opportunity for public hearings and the legal notice for public hearings, the District Engineer shall send a letter of invitation to the hearing to:

- Property owners that may be effected by the project.
- Federal, state, utility companies, and local agency officials.
- Public advisory groups and agencies requesting notice of hearings.
- Other groups, including minority groups or agencies, that by nature of their function, interest, or responsibility may be interested in or effected by the proposed project.

Waiver of Public Hearing

Whether a question about the amount of right-of-way required is significant or not, a hearing waiver may be solicited from effected property owners. The hearing waiver must be in the form shown in [Figure 4-12](#), Waiver of Public Hearing.

A team of ITD personnel consisting of at least the project designer and a right-of-way agent, with additional District personnel as deemed necessary, should make all property owner contacts.

WAIVER OF PUBLIC HEARING

Project No.: _____

Parcel No.: _____

I, the undersigned, have been fully informed concerning Project
_____, including
the project's effect on my property.

I am aware of the amount of right-of-way to be acquired, the relationship to the
remainder of my property, and have been informed that I will receive fair compensation
for Right-of-way acquisition on the project.

I am aware that I have the right to request a public hearing and I hereby waive
said right to a public hearing.

Property Owner

Date

Address